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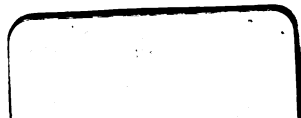
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LORD MONTAGU'S PAGE.

VOL. I.



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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London :
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1858.

249. w. 34.



PREFATORY DEDICATION.

TO GUSTAVUS A. MYERS, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN dedicating to you the following pages, I am moved not more by private friendship and regard than by esteem for your abilities and respect for your many and varied acquirements. It might seem somewhat presumptuous in me to call for your acceptance, or seek your approbation of this work, when not only your general acquaintance with, but your profound knowledge of, almost every branch of modern and ancient literature, qualify and might be expected to prompt

VOL. I.

B.

you to minute and severe criticism. But I have always found, in regard to my own works at least, that those who were best fitted to judge, were the most inclined to be lenient, and that men of high talent and deep learning condescended to tolerate, if not to approve, that which was assailed by very small critics, or scoffed at by men who, calling themselves humourists, omitted the word 'bad' before the application in which they gloried.

To your good humour then I leave the work, and will only add a few words in regard to the object and construction of the story.

We have in the present day romances of very various kinds; and I really know not how to class my present effort. It is not a love story, for anything like that which was the great moving power of your energies—at least in less material days than these—has very little part in the book. I cannot call it a novel without a hero, because it is altogether dedicated to the adventures of one man. I cannot call it a romance without a heroine, because there is a woman in it, and a woman with whom I am myself very much in love. I cannot call it absolutely a historical romance, because there are several characters which are not historical, and I am afraid I have taken a few little liberties with chronology, which were she as prudish a dame as some of

the middle-age ladies that I could mention, would either earn me a *box* of the ear, or produce so much scandal that my good name would be lost for ever. Plague take the months and the days, they are always getting in one's way ; but, however, I do believe I have been very reverent and respectful to their grandmothers, the years, and, with due regard for precedence, and the Court Guide, have not put any of them out of her proper place.

I do not altogether wish to call this a book of character ; for I do not exactly understand that word as the public has lately been taught to understand it. There is no peasant or cobbler, or bricklayer's apprentice in the whole book, endowed with superhuman qualities, moral and physical. There is no personage in high station given as the type of a class—imbued with intense selfishness, or demoniac passions, wicked without motive, heartless against common sense, and utterly degraded from that noble humanity, God's best and holiest gift to mankind. There is no meek, poor, puling, sappy lover, who condescends humbly to be bamboozled and befooled through three volumes, or Heaven knows how many numbers, for the sake of marrying the heroine in the end. I therefore cannot properly, in the present day, call it a work of character.

I might call it, perhaps—although the hero is an Englishman—a picture of the times of Louis XIII; but alas! I have not ventured to give a full picture of these times. We have become so uncommonly cleanly and decorous in our own days, that a mere allusion to the dirt and indecency of the age of our great grandmothers, is not to be tolerated. In order, indeed, to preserve something like veri-similitude, I have been obliged to glance, in one chapter, at the freedom of manners of the days to which I refer; but it has been a mere glance, and given in such a manner that the cheek of one who understands it, in the sense which one of those very days would understand it, must have lost the power of blushing. At all events it can never sully or offend the pure; nor lead the impure any further wrong. There are a great many explanations and comments, in illustrations of the times, which I should have liked to give to that part of my readers who have put on the right of knowing all things at the same time that the third change was made in their dress, and I would have done so, in notes, but, unfortunately, I do not write Greek; and a little incident prevented me from writing these notes in Latin. A work, a most interesting work, was published a few years ago in London, called the Bernstein Hexe, or Amber Witch. More than one transla-

tion appeared ; and one of these had the original notes—some written in Latin, where they were peculiarly anatomical and indecent—but to my surprise I found that several ladies were fully versed in that sort of Latinity. I cannot flatter myself with having a sufficient command of the Roman tongue to be enabled to veil the meaning more completely from the unlearned.

Only in the case of two personages have I attempted to elaborate character, in regard to my hero, and in regard to the Cardinal de Richelieu. The former, though not altogether fictitious, must go with very little comment. I wished to shew how a young heart may be hardened by circumstances, and how it may be softened, and its better feelings evolved by a propitious change. The latter, I will confess, I have laboured much ; because I think the world in general—and I myself also—have done injustice to one of the greatest men that ever lived. Very early in life I depicted him when he had reached old age—that is to say, his old age, for he had not, at the time of his death, numbered as many years as are now upon my own head. He had then been tried in the fire of the most terrible circumstances which had perhaps ever assayed a human heart. Not only tried but hardened, and even then, upon his deathbed, his burst of tenderness to his old friend, Bois

Robert, his delight in the Arts, and passion for flowers, showed that the tender—and may I not say more noble?—feelings of the man, had not been entirely swallowed up by the hard duties of the statesman, or the galling cares of the politician. I now present him to the reader at a much earlier period of life: young, vigorous, successful, happy—when the germs of all those qualities for which men have reproached or applauded him, were certainly developed—were growing to maturity—when the severity which afterwards characterized him and the gentleness which he, as certainly, displayed, had both been exercised; but when the briars and thorns had not fully grown up, and before the soft grass of the heart had been trampled under foot.

All men have mixed characters. I do not believe in perfect evil or in perfect goodness on this earth; but at various times of life, the worse or the better spirit predominates, according to the nourishment and encouragement it receives. How far Richelieu changed, and when, and how he changed, would require a longer discussion than can be here afforded. But one thing is to be always remembered, that he was generally painted by his enemies; and where they admit high qualities and generous feelings, we may be sure that it was done with a niggard hand, and add something to the tribute of the unwilling witness.

In regard to critics it may be supposed that I have spoken, a few pages back, somewhat irreverently. I do not mean to do so in the least. Amongst them are some most admirable men; some who have done great, real, tangible service to the public—who have guided, if not formed public taste, and for them I have the greatest possible respect. I speak not of the contributors to our greater and more pretentious Reviews, although perhaps a mass of deeper learning, more clear and acute investigation and purer critical taste, cannot be found in the literature of the world than that contained in their pages; but I speak of the whole body of contemporary critics, many of whose minor articles are full of astute perception and sound judgment. But there are others for whom, though I have the most profound contempt, I have a most horrible fear. It is useless 'in Southern Climates, such as that which I inhabit, to attempt to prevent yourself from being stung by mosquitoes, or to keep your ears closed against their musical but venomous song. The only plan which presents any chance of success—at least it is as good as any other—is to go down upon your knees and humbly to beseech them to spare you. I therefore most reverently beseech the moral mosquitoes who are accustomed to whistle and sing about my lonely path to for-

bear as much as possible, and although their critical virulence may be aroused to the highest pitch by seeing a man walk quietly on for thirty years along the only firm path he can find amongst the bogs and quagmire of literature, to spare at least those parts which are left naked by his tailor and his shoemaker. To remember, in other words, that besides the faults and errors, for which I am myself clearly responsible, there is some allowance to be made for the faults of my amanuensis and for the errors of my printer. I admit I am the worst corrector in the whole world, but I do hope that the liberality of criticism will not think fit to see, as has lately been done, errors of mind, in errors clearly of the printer, especially in works which, by some arrangement between Mr. Newby and the Atlantic, I never by any means see till the book has passed through the press. But should they still be determined to lay the whole blame upon the poor author's shoulders, I may as well furnish them with some excuse for so doing. The best that I know is to be found in the following little anecdote.

When I was quite a young boy, there was a painter in Edinburgh of the name of Skirvin, celebrated both for his taste and genius, and his minute accuracy in portrait painting. A very beautiful lady of my acquaint-

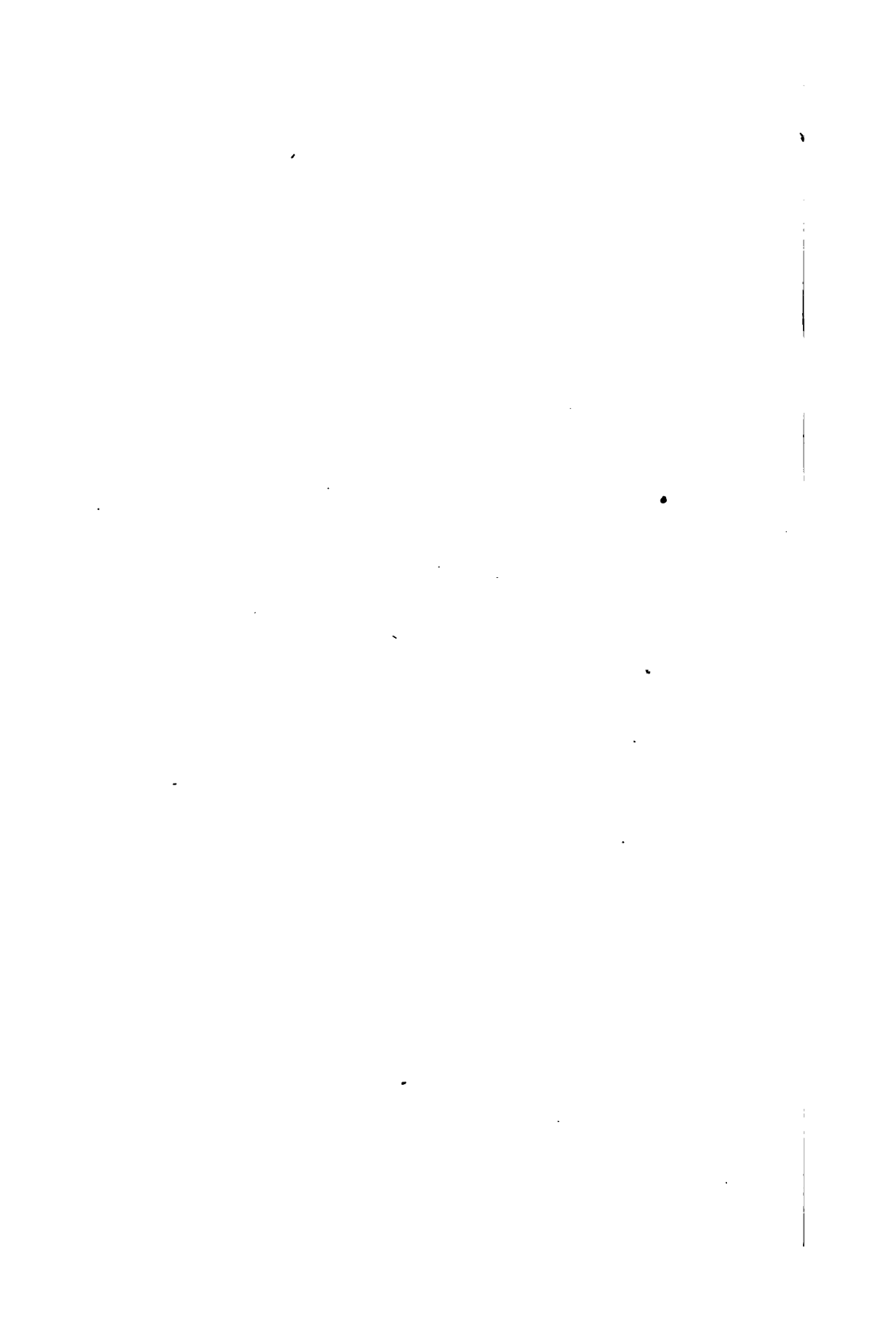
ance sat to him for her portrait in a falling collar of rich and beautiful lace. Unfortunately there was a hole in the lace, and, as usual, he did not suffer her to see the portrait till it was completed. When she did see it, there was a portrait of the hole as well as herself. "Well, Mr. Skirvin," she said, "I think you need not have painted the tear."

"Well, Madam," answered the painter, "then you should have mended it first."

G. P. R. JAMES.

Richmond, Virginia, U.S.,

May, 1858.



LORD MONTAGU'S PAGE.

CHAPTER I.

It was a dark and stormy night—a very dark night indeed. No dog's mouth, whether terrier, mastiff, or newfoundland, was ever so dark as that night. The hatches had been battened down and every aperture but one by which any of the great curly-pated, leaping waves could jump into the vessel had been closed.

What vessel? the reader may perhaps enquire. Well, that being a piece of reasonable curiosity—although I do wish as a general

thing that readers would not be so impatient—I will gratify it and answer the enquirer's question; and indeed would have told him all about it in five minutes, if he would but have given me time.

What vessel? asks the reader. Why a little heavy-looking, fore-and-aft, one-masted ship, somewhat tubbish in form, which had battled with a not very favourable gale during a long stormy day, and had, as the sun went down, approached the coast of France, it might be somewhat too close for safety. The atmosphere in the cabin below was hot and oppressive. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when not one breath of air, notwithstanding all the bullying and roaring of Boreas, had been able to get in during the whole day? But such being the case, and respiration in the little den being difficult, the only altogether-terrestrial animal—sailors are of course amphibious—which that vessel contained, had forced his

way up the deck, through the only narrow outlet which had been left open.

The amphibia have always a considerable dislike and some degree of contempt for all land animals, and the five sailors, with their skipper, who formed all the crew so small a craft required, would probably have driven below the intruder upon their labors, had they had time, leisure, or light to notice him at all. But for near two hours he stood at the stern on the weather side of the ship, holding on by the bulwarks, wet to the skin, with his hat blown off and probably swimming back towards Old England, and his hands numbed with cold and with hard grasping.

There is something in the very act of holding on tight which increases the natural tenacity of purpose that exists in some minds, and, if I may use a very vulgar figure, thickens the glue. At the end of the two hours one of the sailors, who had something to do at the stern in a great hurry, ran up to the spot where the

only passenger was clinging and nearly tumbled over him. Then of course he cursed him, as men in a hurry are wont to do, and exclaimed : "Get down below ! What the devil are you doing up here, where you are in every body's way ? Get down, I say."

"I will not," was the reply in a quiet, and even sweet, but very resolute voice.

"Then I'll knock you overboard by ——" said the seaman, adding an oath which did not much strengthen the threat in the ears to which it was addressed.

"You cannot, and you dare not try," answered the other : but then, the voice of the skipper, who had been working hard at the tiller was heard exclaiming : "Let him alone, Tom, ——" and he beneficently called down condemnation, not only upon the eyes but upon all the members of his subordinate. "Mind your own work and let him alone."

Now it may be worth while to ask what sort of a personage was this whom the somewhat

irascible Master Tom threatened to knock overboard and who replied with so little reverence for the threat. He could not be himself a very formidable person, at least in appearance—a very necessary qualification of the assertion, for I have known very formidable snakes the most pitiful looking reptiles I ever beheld; and some of the most dangerous men ever seen, either on the same stage of life where we are playing our parts with them, or on the wider boards of history, have been the least impressive in person and the meanest looking creatures.

But as I was saying—for it is too late to finish that sentence now—the single passenger could not be very formidable in appearance; for Tom was probably too wise and too experienced to engage in what he considered even an equal struggle on so dark a night, while the wind was blowing a gale and the little craft heeling gunwale to. Yet he could not be one without some powers, internally, if not

externally, which rendered him fully as careless of consequences as the other. Well, he was only a boy of some five feet seven or eight in height, slight looking in form, and dressed in a common sailor's jacket; but in a leathern belt round his waist was a large case knife on the handle or hilt of which, while he continued to hold on to the sail of the bulwark with his left hand, he clasped the fingers of his right in a very resolute and uncompromising manner. We all know that bowie knives, in one hand at least, are very useful companions and in all hands very formidable weapons. Now the knife in the lad's black leather belt was not at all unlike a bowie knife, and not the least less formidable. There was the slight insinuating curve, the heavy haft, the tremendous long blade, the razor-like edge and the sharp unfailing point; so that it is not improbable that the youth's confidence was mightily strengthened by the companionship of such a serviceable friend, although he was not half the

size of his adversary, and not above a third of his weight. Boys however are always daring, and he could not at the utmost have passed much more than seventeen years on the surface of this cold earth.

Now all this account would have been spared the beloved reader had not a trait of character at the outset of the career of any personage, in a poem, novel, romance or tale been worth half a volume of description afterwards—It would have been spared indeed simply because the little incident ended just where we have left it. Tom the sailor, though a reckless, ill-conditioned fellow, was obedient to the voice of his commander, and after having boused the boom a little to the one side or the other of the vessel—which side I neither know nor care—he returned to the bow, muttering a few objurgations to the youth, implying that if it had not been for him they would never have come upon that d——d voyage at all, and that probably

they would all go to the bottom for having such a Jonas on board.

The truth is, Tom had left his sweetheart at Plymouth.

As soon as he was gone, the skipper called the lad a little nearer, and said, "Tom says true enough, Master Ned. You were better below on every account; I don't see what you want to come up for on such a night as this."

"Because I do not want to be smothered, Captain Tinley," replied Master Ned. "I had rather be frozen than stewed, rather be melted by the water like a piece of salt or sugar than baked like a pasty. Besides, what harm do I do here? I am in no one's way, and that sea-dog could do his work as well with me here as without me. But I'll tell you what, Captain, we are getting into smoother water. Some land is giving us a lee. We ought soon to see a light."

"Why were you ever here before, youngster?" asked the Master.

"Ay, twice," said the boy, "and I know that when the sea smooths down as it is now doing, we cannot be far from the island; and you will soon see the lantern."

"Well keep a sharp look out then," was the reply, "you can see better where you stand than I can, and it is so dark those fellows forward may miss it. A minute or two to-night may save or sink us."

"It matters not much which," answered the young man—a strange thought for one at the age when life is brightest! but there are cases when the disappointment of all early hopes—when the first grasp of misfortune's iron hand has been so hard that it seems to have crushed the butterfly of the heart even unto death—when it is not alone the gay colors have been brushed off, the soft down swept away, but when Hope's own life seems extinguished.

Happily, it is but for a time. There is immortality in hope. She cannot die! the fabled Phoenix of the ancients was but an

emblem, like every other myth, and if the painting of Cupid burning a butterfly over a flame was the image of love tormenting the soul, the Phoenix rising from her ashes was as surely a figure of the constant resurrection of Hope.—Ay, from her very ashes does she rise to brighter and still brighter existence, till, soaring over the cold Lethe of the grave, she spreads her wings for ever to the Elysian fields beyond.

It is an old axiom, never to say “die;” and though there be those who say it—ay, and in a momentary madness give the word the force of action, did they but wait, they themselves would find that, though circumstances remained unchanged—the prospect as rugged or the night as dark—the sunshine of hope would break forth again to cheer, or her star twinkle through the gloom to guide.

The boy felt what he said at the time, but it was only for the time; and there were years before him in which he never felt so again.

"Captain, there is a light surely towards the south-west," said the lad, "that must be the light at St. Martin's on Rhe. It seems very far off. We must be hugging the main shore too close."

"I don't see it," answered the skipper, "but there is one due east, or half a point north—what the devil is that?"

The boy ran across the deck, nearly at the risk of his life, for, though the sea and wind had both fallen, the little craft still pitched and heeled so much that he lost his footing and had well nigh gone overboard. He held on, however, was up in a moment, and exclaimed, "Marans! The light is Maran's Church! You'll be on the sands in ten minutes. Put about, put about, if you would save the ship!"

A great deal of hurry and confusion succeeded, and there was much unnecessary noise, and still more unnecessary swearing. The youth, who had discovered the danger was

the most silent of the party, but he was not inactive, aiding the Captain with more strength than he seemed to possess to bring the ship's head as near to the wind as possible; and the manœuvre was just in time, for the lead at one time showed that they were just upon the very verge of the sands at the moment when, answering the helm better than she did at first, she made way towards the west and the danger was past. In half an hour—for their progress was slow—the light upon the Isle de Rhe could be distinctly seen, and one by one, other lights and land-marks appeared, rendering the rest of the voyage comparatively safe.

Still the lad kept his place upon the deck, addressing hardly a word to any one, but watching with a keen eye the eastern line of shore, which was every now and then visible, notwithstanding the darkness. The moon, too, began to give some light, though she could not be seen; for the clouds were still

thick, and their rapid race across the sky told, that though the sea under the lee of the Isle de Rhe had lost all its fierceness, the gale was blowing with unabated fury.

The lad quitted his hold of the bulwarks and walked slowly to the Captain's side, as if to speak to him; but the skipper spoke first. His professional vanity was somewhat mortified, or perhaps he was afraid that his professional reputation might suffer by the lad's report in the ears of those whose approbation was valuable to him, and consequently he was inclined to put a little bit of defensive armour on a spot where he fancied himself vulnerable.

"We had a narrow squeak of it just now, Master Ned," he said, "however, it was no fault of mine, I could not help it. It is twenty years since I was last in this d——d place, and the chart they gave me is a mighty bad one. Besides, those beastly gales we have had ever since Ushant might puzzle the devil, and this dark night too!"

"You've saved the ship, Captain," answered the lad, "that is all we have to do with;" and then, perhaps thinking he might as well add something to help the good skipper's palliatives for well nigh running the ship ashore, he added, "Besides, there is a strong current running—what between the sands of Obron and the point of Rhe—and the Pertuis d'Antioche—I do not know very well how it is, but so I was told by one of the men last time I was here."

"Ay, 'tis so, I dare say," answered the Captain. "Indeed it must be so; for we could never have got so far to the eastward without one of those currents. I wish to Heaven some one would put them all down; for one can't keep them all in one's head any how. You tell the Duke when you see him again, about the currents, Master Ned."

"What is the use of telling him anything at all, but that we got safe to Rochelle?" asked the lad. "If we get there—as there is now no

doubt—he will ask no questions how ; and if we don't, any body may blame us who likes, it will make little difference to you or me." The skipper was about to answer ; but just at that moment a light broke suddenly out upon that longish point of land which a boat that keeps under the western shore of France has to double—as the reader very well recollects—before it can make the port of La Rochelle ; and the boy as suddenly laid his hand on the Captain's arm, saying, " Make for that light as near as you can, Captain—keep the lead going—drop your anchor as close as you can, and send me ashore in a boat."

" Why, Master Ned, I was told to land you at Rochelle," replied the other.

" You were told to do as I bade you," answered the lad, as stoutly as if he had been a Captain of horse, adding the saving clause, " in every thing except the navigation of your vessel. I must be ashore where you see that light—so, send down for my bags, have the boat

all ready, and when I am landed go on to Rochelle, and wait till you hear more."

The Captain of the vessel did not hesitate to obey; the ship ran speedily for the shore, and approached perhaps nearer than was altogether safe; the boat was lowered to the water, and the lad sprang in without bidding adieu to any one. There was a heavy sea running upon the coast, and it required no slight skill and strength on the part of the two stout rowers to land him in safety; but he showed neither fear nor hesitation, though probably he knew the extent of the danger and the service; for when he sprang out into the shallow water, where the boat grounded, he gave each of the men a gold piece, and then watched them with a somewhat anxious eye, till they had got their boat through the surf into the open sea.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT an extraordinary world it is! Men in general are mere shell-fish, unapproachable except at certain tender points, such as the eyes of the crab on the soft yellow skin under an alligator's gullet—Achilles' heels, which were neglected by the mothers of those sapient reptiles when they were dipped in Styx. But perhaps it is as well as it is; for if man were tender all over and once began to think of all the misery that is going on around him, the faces he would make would be horrible to see.

Reader, at this very moment there are thousands dying in agony—there are many starving for lack of food—there is a whole host of gentle hearts watching the expiring lamp of life in the eyes of those most dearly loved—there are multitudes of noble spirits and mighty minds struggling in doubt for to-morrow's daily crust; there is crime, folly, sorrow, anguish, shame, remorse, despair around us on every side, and yet we are as merry as a grasshopper, unless somebody snaps off one of our own legs. There is not an instant of time that does not bring with it a thousand waves of agony over the stormy sea of human existence, and yet every man's light boat dances on, and the mariner sings, till one of the many billows overwhelms him. It is quite as well as it is. Some, however, are blessed, or cursed as it may be, with a faculty of feeling for others; and that boy, as he took his way up from the shore towards the little hillock of sand on which a bonfire of pine logs was blazing—

with two heavy bags on his arms, and the rain dashed by the fierce wind in his face—could not help thinking of the roofless heads and chilled hearts he knew were in the world.

“Poor souls,” he thought, “in an hour I shall be warm and dry and comfortable, and to-morrow all this will be forgotten; but for them there is no comfort, no better to-morrow.”

Stay a minute, my boy. Do not go too fast and reckon without your host, either for yourself or others! Joy may light up the dim eye, hope fan the aching brow; and you, after all you have seen and undergone even in your short life, how dare you count upon the events of the next hour—nay of the next moment?

He climbed the hill stoutly, but slowly; for it was steep and his bags were heavy. The wicked wind, too, fought with him all the way up, and the large rain, which had lately begun to fall, came loaded with small particles of hail, as if it sought to aid the wind in keeping him back till their united force could put out the

beacon fire. But the pine was full of resin, and it burned on, with the flame and the smoke whirled about by the wind but never extinguished, until at length he stood on the windward side of the fire and looked round, as if expecting to see the man who lighted it.

There was no one there however, and the youth, who, it must be acknowledged was of a somewhat eager and impatient temper and apt to come to hasty conclusions, fancied, for a moment or two, that those he should have found there had grown weary of waiting in that boisterous night, and had left him to enjoy its pleasures or its terrors by himself. A moment after, however, as the flame swayed a little more to the westward, he caught a glimpse of the ground on the other side of the hill, sinking rapidly down into a little dell where some less arid soil seemed to have settled—enough at least to bear some scanty herbage, a few low bushes, and some thin pines—and there, amongst the latter, appeared a small fixed light.

It might be a candle in a cottage window, and probably was ; for it was too red for a Jack-o'-lantern.

" Ah ! I can at least find out where I am," thought the lad ; " but I dare say the men are there, taking care of their own skins and little caring about mine."

Thus thinking, he began to descend, and had not proceeded far when a voice hailed him, in French. The lad made no answer, but went on ; for, to say sooth, he was somewhat moody with all the events of the last three or four days.

" Is that you, Master Ned, I say ?" repeated the voice, in English, but with a very strong foreign accent.

" Ay, ay !" replied the youth, " but how the devil did you expect me to find you, if you did not stay by the fire ?"

" Oh we kept a good look out," answered a stout man of some five and thirty years of age, who was advancing to meet him. " We have

waited for you by the fire long enough these two last nights, and as we could see any one who came across the blaze, there was no use of one getting frozen, or blown away on the top of the hill. But what has made you so long behind? You were to have been here on Tuesday night, so the letters said. What kept you?"

"Head winds all the way from Ushant," replied the boy.

"But let us get on," observed Jargeau; "for we must be far from the town, and time enough has been lost already."

"Well, come down to the cottage," said the other, in a musing sort of tone, "you want something to refresh you, while the horses are being saddled. Here, let me carry your bags;" and as he spoke he laid his hand upon one of the large leather-covered cases.

"Not that one," said the youth, sharply, pushing away his hand. "Here, you may take this."

The man laughed, saying, "Ay, as sharp as ever!" and they descended to the pines, where the light still glimmered behind one of the few remaining panes of glass in the window of a dilapidated cottage, on the leeward side of which stood three horses, tethered, but without their saddles.

The interior of the building offered no very cheerful aspect; but seeing that the boy had not eaten anything for the last twelve hours, that he was weary, wet, and cold, the sight of a very tolerable supply of viands on the floor—for there was furniture of no kind within—and a large black bottle filled to hold at least a gallon, was very consolatory.

The only other objects which the cottage contained were the resin candle fixed into a split log, and a lean, but apparently strong man of perhaps forty, whose face had evidently had at least a ten years' intimacy with the brandy flask. He was stretched out at length upon the ground, but with his head and arm

within reach of the viands and bottle, and though, in answer to some observations of his comrade of the watch, he swore manfully that he touched neither, yet he wiped his mouth upon the sleeve of his coat, as if he felt that something might be clinging to his lips which might contradict him.

"Ah, Master Ned," he exclaimed, in French, but without moving from where he lay. "I am right glad you have come; for my throat is as dry as an ear of rye; Jargeau there would not have the cold meat touched nor the bottle broached till you came."

"By the Lord you have broached it though," exclaimed the other, who had been stooping down, "the neck is quite wet, you vagabond, and if we did not need you I would give you a touch of my knife for disobeying my orders—But come, Master Ned, sit down on the floor and eat. There is enough left in the bottle for you at all events; and on my soul he shall

not have another drop till both you and I have finished."

The other man only laughed, and the boy applied himself to the food with a good will. When he had eaten silently for some ten minutes, he stretched out his hand, saying, "give me the bottle Jargeau, I will have one draught of wine and then I am ready—Pierrot get up and put the saddles on the horses."

"No wine will you get here," replied Jargeau, "but this is better for you, wet as you are—as good eau de vie as ever came from Tounay Charente. Take a good drink, you will need it."

"Get up! and saddle the horses," said the boy, before he drank, addressing, somewhat sharply, the lean gentleman on the ground; "have you forgotten St. Martin's, good Pierrot?"

"I will have my drink first," answered the other, grinning. "I brought the bottle here, and drop for drop all round is fair play."

As the quickest mode of ending all dispute the youth drank, and gave the bottle to Pierrot,

but it remained so long at his lips that Jargeau snatched it angrily from him, swearing he would not leave a drop. He seemed loath to part with it; but at length reared his long limbs from the floor, and lighting another resin candle, went forth to perform his task.

"And now, Master Ned," said Jargeau, "I have news for you, you may be, will not like. You are not going to La Rochelle to-night. There is no one there you want to see."

"I must go," said the boy, thoughtfully, as if speaking to himself. "I must go."

"But just listen, Master Ned," said Jargeau, "I know you are somewhat hard headed; but what is the use of going to a place where there is no one to deal with. Now the Prince de Soubise and the Duc de Rohan are both at the chateau of Mauzé, and with them are all the people you want to see."

The lad paused and mused for several minutes without making any answer; and Jargeau pressed him to take some more of the brandy,

saying that he would have a ride of thirty miles. But still he replied nothing; till at length, awaking from his reverie, he asked, "Who is to guide me?—I do not know the way to Mauzé."

"Oh, Pierrot is here for the very purpose," answered Jargeau, "he will guide you, and though, by one means and another he will find a way to make all you leave of the brandy disappear, you know he is never drunk enough not to find his way."

Master Ned, as they called him, again fell into thought for a moment or two, and then answered,

"It would be better for you to go yourself. But perhaps you are wanted in Rochelle."

"No," answered the other, in an indifferent tone. "I have got to go to Fontenay, where some of our friends—you understand—are to have a meeting to-morrow night."

"Then you must be there of course," replied Master Ned, "but if Pierrot is to ride thirty miles with me, the poor devil had better have some food. He has tasted nothing but the brandy."

"That is enough for him," answered Jargeau, "he cares nothing for meat when he can get drink."

"Well then let him have enough of what he likes best," answered the lad, "and in the meantime I will get a cloak out of the bag, for we shall have a wet ride as well as a long one." Thus saying, he rose, took the bags into the further corner of the cabin, and certainly took a cloak out of one of them. Whether he brought forth anything else I do not say; but the cloak was soon over his shoulders, and a moment after Pierrot appeared at the door, saying that the horses were saddled.

"Here, Pierrot," exclaimed the lad, "come in and devour that chicken, and then you shall have some more of the Devil's drops."

"Take some more yourself, Ned," said Jargeau, "'tis the only way to prevent catching the fever."

The lad assented, and, taking the bottle with both hands, put it to his lips, but

whether any of its contents passed beyond them I am doubtful, seeing that the throat, which was fully exposed by his falling collar, showed no signs of deglutition. He then handed the liquor to Pierrot, who by this time had torn a large fat fowl to pieces and swallowed one half of it. The brandy fared still worse, for although Jargeau frowned upon him fiercely while he drank : the bottle, whatever remained of the contents when he put it to his mouth, left that organ quite empty.

"You drunken beast, you have swallowed it all," said Jargeau.

"True," answered Pierrot, with a watery and somewhat swimming eye, "my mouth is not large, but it is deep. I wish the Pertuis d'Antioche could be filled with the same stuff and my mouth be laid at the other end. There would be only one current then, Monsieur Jargeau."

The lad and the elder man both eyed him keenly as he spoke, but, strange to say, the

sight seemed to please the former more than the latter, and, as they issued forth to mount, Jargeau drew Pierrot aside, and said something to him in a low but angry voice.

The lad took not the slightest notice of this little interlude, but, advancing to where the horses stood, with bent heads, not liking the rain at all, he selected the one which seemed to him the strongest and best without asking consent of any one, placed his bags, tied together with a strong leathern thong, over the pommel of the saddle, and then sprang into his seat.

"Come on, Pierrot," he cried, "we have far to ride, it seems, and but little time."

Jargeau advanced to his side, and said, in a whisper, "That beast is half drunk, take care of him. You remember it is the Chateau of Mauzé you are going to. He may turn refractory."

"Oh, no fear," replied Master Ned, "I can drive him as well as any other ass. I have

driven him before. Mauzé ! that is upon the road to Niort ?”

“ Yes,” answered the other, “ where the road forks, keep to the right, and then straight on—you cannot miss it—I think the moon will get the better of the clouds and shine out.”

“ Good !” said the youth. “ We want a little light.” Thus saying, he struck the horse with his heel and the beast started forward. Pierrot, who by this time had contrived to mount, followed, and Jargeau returned to the cottage, as he said, to put out the light.

CHAPTER III.

THERE had been something a little peculiar in the way in which Master Ned had pronounced the words, "We want a little light," which, if Jargeau had remarked, the curl of his lip, as they were uttered, might have induced him to turn his horse's head towards Rochelle instead of Fontenay, for in truth the lad spoke of other than moonlight. Ned rode on in silence however, for some minutes, along a small road or rather path, which led from the old cottage

first to a small straggling village, such as is still to be seen in the Bocage and its neighbourhood, and then to a place of junction with the high road running from Marans to Mauzé. It was called a high road then, god wot, but it has fallen into a second class way now; and was in all but name a very low road always.

Pierrot was silent too, not that he had not a strong impulse towards eloquence upon him, but that he felt a certain confusion of thought which did not permit of seeing distinctly which was the head, which the tail of a subject. The last draught of brandy had been a deep one. Yet Pierrot was practised in all the various phases of drunkenness, and in general knew how to carry his liquor discreetly; but this was in fact the reason that he abstained from using his tongue, feeling an intense conviction that it would either speak some gross nonsense, or betray some secret, or commit some other of those lamentable blunders in which drunken men's tongues are wont to

indulge, if he once opened his mouth. It was not an easy task to keep quiet, it is true, and had he not been a very experienced man he could not have accomplished it; but the struggle was soon to be brought to a conclusion, for when they had ridden about half a mile Master Ned turned sharp upon him, and asked abruptly, "What was that Jargeau said to you just as we were coming away, Pierrot?"

"Oh, nothing," answered Pierrot, in a muddled voice, "but to lead you right."

"Where?" demanded the lad, sternly.

"Why to Mauzé, to be sure," replied Pierrot.

"What a pity he gave himself such unnecessary trouble," answered the lad, in a quiet tone, "neither you nor I go to Mauzé to-night, Pierrot."

"Then where in Satan's name are you going?" demanded his companion, checking his horse.

"To Rochelle," replied Master Ned. "Jog on, Maitre Pierrot. It is the next turn on the

right we take, I think—Jog on ! I say. Why do you stop ?”

“ Because I ought to go back and tell Jarreau, and ask him what I am to do,” answered the other, half bewildered with drink and astonishment.

“ You are to do what I tell you, and to do it at once,” replied the lad, “ and if you do not, I have got a persuader here which will sooner convince you than any other argument I can use ;” and as he spoke he drew one of the large horse pistols of that day from beneath his cloak, and pointed it straight at Pierrot’s head. “ It is the same argument that stopped your running away and leaving us in the enemy’s teeth, at St. Martin’s, in Rhé,” he said.

“ You young devil, the ball is in my leg still,” answered Pierrot, “ but this is not fair, Master Ned. You might be right enough then, for you thought I was going to betray you, though on my life and soul I was only afraid. Now you

want me to disobey those I am bound to serve, and do not even give me a reason."

"I will give you a reason, though I have not much time, for fear the powder in the pan should get damp," replied the boy, "but my reason is, that I was told to go to Rochelle and see Maitre Clement Tournon and therefore I am going. Now in the Isle de Rhé I did not think you were going to betray us, and knew quite well it was mere fear; but at present I do think Jargeau is seeking to betray me or mislead me, which is as bad. At all events you have got to go with me to Rochelle or have the lead in your head, Pierrot, so choose quickly, because you know I do not wait long for any one."

"Well I vow you are too hard upon me, Master Ned," said Pierrot, in a whimpering tone, "you take the very bread out of my mouth and give me over to the vengeance of that cold-blooded devil, Jargeau."

"You will find me a worse devil still," replied Master Ned, coldly, but even as he spoke.

he fell into a fit of thought and then added, "Listen to me, Pierrot, if the brandy has left you any brains or ears either. I want a man like you to go with me a long way, perhaps. It will not be I who pay you, for I have got little enough as you know ; but I will be your surety that you shall be well paid as long as you serve well. I know you to the bottom, you are honest at heart whether you are drunk or sober ; for liquor has not the same effect upon you as upon most men. You are brave enough when you are sober, but a terrible coward when you are drunk. Now if you like to go with me you shall have enough to live on and to get drunk on when I choose to let you get drunk."

"How often will that be?" asked Pierrot, interrupting him.

"I will not make a bargain," answered the lad, "but this much I will say, you may drink whenever I do not tell you I have important business on hand. When I do tell you that, you shall taste nothing stronger than water."

"Good, good," said Pierrot, "strong water you mean, of course."

"Well water," said the youth, sharply, "but remember I am not to be trifled with. As to Jargeau, I will take care he does nothing to injure you. If it be as I think, I have got his head under my belt, and he will soon know that it is so. Now choose quickly; for we have stood here too long."

"Well, I'll go," said Pierrot, "but I am terribly afraid of that Jargeau. However, your pistol is nearest, and so I'll go. I know you are not to be trifled with, well enough; but I must find some way of letting Jargeau know I have left him. It would be a shame to go without telling him, you know, Master Ned."

"We shall find means enough in Rochelle of sending him word," answered the lad, putting up his pistol and resuming his journey.

Pierrot followed, with sundry half-articulate grunts, but he seemed soon to recover both

good humour and spirits; for 'ere they had gone half a mile he burst forth into song; broken and irregular, indeed; now a scrap from one lay, now from another, but at all events it seemed to shew that no very heavy thing was resting on his mind. His rambling scraps of old ditties ran somewhat as follows :

"Whither go you, on this dark, dark night,

"Wayfaring cavalier,

"Go you to love, or go you to fight?

"Either is better by clear moonlight,

"Venturous cavalier.

"By my life the moon is beginning to break through, though how she will manage it I do not know; for there is mud enough in yonder sky to swallow up the tallest horse I ever rode."

"Oh tell-tale moon,

"You are up too soon

"For the long train of kisses yet on the way;

"Your eyes so bright,

"Make all the world light,

"We might just as well kiss in the full of the day."

"She has got behind the clouds again,
Moons and maidens don't know their own
minds."

"Katy went to the cupboard door,

"Ah Katy, Katy!

"What want you in your grandam's store

"Cunning little Katy?

"She went quietly over the floor,

"Fie, Katy, Katy!

"No use of the lock, no use of the door,

"Against that little Katy.

"She's put away her own little snood,

"Fie, little Katy!

"She has got on her grandmother's hood,

"Can that be pretty Katy?

"She has opened the back door into the wood,

"Beware, Katy, Katy!

"Such sly marches never bode good

"To any little Katy.

"But there's a priest with the yeoman tall,

"Is that it, little Katy?

"And now she's wedded and bedded and all,

"And no more little Katy."

The concluding stanzas, if they were neither
very excellent nor very tender, were at least an

indication that his mind was settling down into a calmer state than when he began. They were connected, at all events, and continuity of thought is a great approach to reason—which dwelleth not in the brains of any man together with much brandy. The finer spirit was therefore apparently getting the better of the coarser; and Master Ned thought the time was come for him to take advantage of the change of dynasty, and see whether he could not obtain some advantages from the new ruler.

“Well, Pierrot,” he said, “this is a very pretty business you have been engaged in. After having had the honour of serving the King of England and fighting for the liberty of the Protestants of France, you have been persuaded to aid in trying to betray me into the hands of the enemy, though you did not know that I might not be the bearer of important messages to your own people.”

“Whew,” cried Pierrot, with a long whistle.

Now whistles mean all kinds of things, from the ostracism of a playhouse gallery to the signal of love or housebreaking; but the whistle of good Pierrot was decidedly a whistle of astonishment, and so Master Ned interpreted it.

"Do not affect ignorance or surprise, Pierrot," he said, "that will not do with me. Jargeau is a traitor, that is clear——"

"Well, well, Master Ned," interposed his companion, "you are a mighty sharp lad, beyond question; but sometimes you ride your horse too fast, notwithstanding. Just stop a bit, till my head gets a little, a very little bit clearer, and I'll set you right. As you think the matter worse than it is, I may as well shew it is better. I do not mean to say that they did not want to trick you; but not the way you fancy."

"Why, are not all the towns round in the hands of the Papists?" asked the lad; "we

have had that news in England for the last four months."

"No, no, no," answered Pierrot, "the Papists may have the upper hand in most of them, it is true—but stop a bit, and I'll tell you all clearly. Your long pistol half sobered me, and when I can get to a spring and put my head in, that will wash out the rest of the brandy. It is of no use giving you a muddled tale."

"Take care you do not make one up;" answered Master Ned, "I shall find you out in five minutes."

Pierrot laughed. "I'd as soon try to cheat the Devil," he said, "but let us ride on, there is a well just where the roads cross, and it will serve my turn. Brandy is a fine thing, but a mighty poor counsellor."

The lad followed the suggestion, for he did not wish to give his companion too much time to think, and, urging their horses on, in about five minutes they reached the spot where two

highways crossed, and where a large stone trough received the waters of a beautiful and plentiful spring, affording solace to many a weary and thirsty horse, in those days of saddle travelling. There Pierrot dismounted—slowly and deliberately, for he could not precisely ascertain to what extent he retained a balancing power till his feet touched the ground. With more directness of purpose, however, than could have been expected, he made his way to the trough, and, kneeling down, plunged his head once or twice into the cool water. He then rose, with his long ragged black hair still streaming, and after the horses had been suffered to drink, the two travellers resumed their way. The moon by this time had completely scattered the clouds, glimpses of dark blue sky appeared between the broken masses, and the keen eye of the young lad could mark every change in the expression of Pierrot's face as he went on.

“Now, Master Ned,” he said, “I think my

noddle has got clear enough of the fumes to let you know something of what people have been about here, which you do not know rightly I can see. Rochelle is going to be taken by the Catholics—that's clear to me."

"Unless the great Duke of Buckingham drives the Catholics beyond the Loire, it must be taken," answered the lad. "You can never stand against all France—but what makes you give up hope, Pierrot?"

"First, the King of France and his devil of a Cardinal are drawing together a great army all round us," answered Pierrot; "a greater army than ever approached Rochelle before. That we could manage to resist, but then they are going very coolly to work fortifying every town and well-pitched village of the Papists within fifty miles of the city, and filling them with soldiers; so that every egg that comes to market will have to be fought for. Well that we could perhaps manage too, for we could get supplies from England;

but look here, Master Ned, there are two parties in Rochelle. Our best lords and wisest citizens, our chief generals and captains know well that our only hope is in the support of England; but there is a more numerous, if not a stronger, party who do not like your great Duke, would have nothing to do with your good country, and would stand alone and fight it out by ourselves. One of their chief men is Jargeau."

"I see," said the lad; "but what did he seek by trying to entrap me to go to Mauzé?"

"First, your letters were likely, either to fall into the hands of the Catholics, and, by shewing how firmly Rochelle counts upon English help, frighten them and make them unreasonable," answered Pierrot, "or otherwise to fall into the hands of Miguët and his other friends, who would take care they should never reach their destination. That was the plan, Master Ned."

"And not a bad plan either," answered the other, thoughtfully, "supposing I had any letters. But, as you say, Rochelle is in a bad

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way, for if her leaders are afraid to let each other know their exact position, and what they may count upon, she is a house divided against herself and cannot stand. But what made Jargeau think I had letters? Nobody told him so, I think."

"No, but they told him you would have messages for our principal people," answered Pierrot, adding, not unwilling perhaps to shew a little scorn for one whose strong will had exercised what may be called an unnatural ascendancy over him more than once, "and Jargeau never believed that they would trust messages to such a young boy as you."

"He must have thought my memory very bad," replied the lad, "not to be able to carry a message from England to France. But my memory is not so bad, good Pierrot, as he may find some day. At all events, if Rochelle is to be lost by the intrigues of a man who does not choose his comrades to know where succour lies if they like to seek it, all the

world shall know who ruined a good cause. But I suppose, Pierrot, all he told me of the meeting of the reformed leaders at Mauzé was a mere lure?"

"No, no, it is all true;" answered Pierrot. "The Prince is there, and Rohan, and a dozen of others; and if you could have got safe through without the loss of your bags you would have found some of those you want—but I suppose he had provided against that—I don't know—he never told me; but it is likely."

"Very likely," replied Master Ned; "but you say some of those I want. I only want one person, and him I must see if it be possible. Is Maitre Clement Tournon in the city?"

"He is not with those at the Chateau de Mauzé," replied Pierrot. "I know little of him. He is a goldsmith, is he not—a very quiet man?"

"Probably," answered the lad, "quiet men are the best friends in this world. So on to

Rochelle! Will they let us pass the gates at night?"

"'Tis a hard question to answer," said Pierrot, "sometimes they are very strict, sometimes lax enough. But it is somewhat late, young sir, and if no one of the guard is in love with moonlight, we shall find them all asleep."

"Asleep in such times as these!" exclaimed the young man.

"Why, either the Papists are trying to throw us off our guard," said Pierrot, "or they are too busy cutting off each other's heads to mind ours. They have not troubled us much as yet. True, they have taken a town or two and stopped some of our parties into the country, and begun what they call lines, but not a man of their armies has come within cannon shot, and there is not much more strictness than in the times of the *little war* which has been going on for the last fifty years. But the people in the town vary from time to

time. When one man commands, the very nose of a Catholic will be fired at, and when another is on duty, the gates would be opened to Schomberg, or the Devil, or any one else who came in a civil manner. But there is Rochelle peeping over the trees yonder, just as if she had come out to see the moon shine."

"Well then, mark me, good Pierrot," said Master Ned, "I expect you to do all you can to make them open the gates to us—you understand what that means, I suppose?"

"That I shall have a shot in my other leg, or through my hand, if I do not, I presume," answered Pierrot; "but don't be afraid. When you have given me a crown, I shall have taken service with you; and then, you know, or ought to know, I will serve you well."

The lad, it would seem, had some reason to judge that the estimate which his companion put upon such a bond was just. Indeed, in those days, the act of taking service, confirmed by earnest money, implied

much more than it does in our more enlightened times. Then, a man who had thus bound himself thought himself obliged to let nobody cheat his master but himself—to feel a personal interest in his purposes and in his safety. Now, alas ! we hire a man to rob us himself and help all others to rob us ; to brush our coats in the evening and cut our throats in the morning, if we have too many silver spoons. However, Master Ned put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a piece of money, which he held out to Pierrot, who seemed for a moment to hesitate to take it.”

“ I wish I had told Jargeau I was going to quit him,” he said, “ not that he ever gave me a sol, but plenty of promises. How much is it, Master Ned ?”

“ A spur rial,” replied the boy, “ worth a number of your French crowns.”

“ Lead us not into temptation,” cried Pierrot, taking and pocketing the money, “ and now tell me what I am to do.”

"All you can to make them open the gates," answered Master Ned, "you have got the word, of course?"

"Nay, faith not I," replied Pierrot, "Jargeau got it this evening; but I did not think of asking. Never mind, however, all the people in Rochelle know me. I will get in if any one can."

He was destined to be disappointed, however. In the little suburb just before the gate, he and his companion passed a little tavern where lights were burning and people singing and making a good deal of noise, but it was all in vain that Pierrot knocked at the large heavy door or shouted through a small barred aperture. No one could be made to hear, and he and Master Ned were forced to retreat to one of the cabarets of the fauxbourg and wait the coming of daylight.

CHAPTER IV.

“WHO is that boy?” said one of the early shopkeepers of Rochelle, speaking to his neighbour, who was engaged in the same laudable occupation as himself, namely, that of opening his shop for the business of the day. At the same time he pointed out a handsome lad, well, but plainly dressed, who was walking along, somewhat slowly, towards the better part of the city. “Who is that boy, I wonder?”

“He’s a stranger, by that cloak with the

silver lace," replied the other, "most likely came over in the ship that nearly ran upon the pier last night. He carries a sword too. Those English make monkeys even of their children; but he is a good-looking youth, nevertheless, and bears himself manly. Ah, there is that worthless vagabond Pierrot la Grange speaking to him. And now Master Pierrot is coming here, I will have naught to do with him or his;" and so saying, he turned into his shop.

The other tradesman waited without, proposing, in his own mind, to ask Pierrot sundry questions regarding his young companion; for, although he had no curiosity, as he frequently assured his neighbours, yet he always liked to know who every body was and what was their business.

Pierrot, however, had only had time to cross over from the other corner of the street and ask, in a civil and even sober tone, where the dwelling of Monsieur Clement Tournon could be found, when the good Tradesman exclaimed,

“ My life ! What is that ! ” and instantly darted across the street as fast as a somewhat short pair of legs would carry him.

Now the street there was not very wide, but it was crossed by one much broader within fifty yards of the spot where the shopkeeper was standing, called, in that day, the “ rue de l’Horloge ”. It may have gone by a hundred names since. The street was quite vacant too when Pierrot addressed the tradesman ; but the moment after two sailors came up the rue de l’Horloge and one of them, as soon as he set eyes on Master Ned, who was standing with his back to the new comers, laid his hand upon his shoulder and said something, in a tone apparently not the most civil, for the lad instantly shook himself free, turned round and laid his hand upon the hilt of the short sword he carried. It seemed to the good shopkeeper that he made an effort to draw it, but whether it fitted too close, or it had got somewhat rusted to the scabbard during the previous rainy night,

it would not come forth, and in the mean time the sailor struck him a thundering blow on the head with a stick he carried. The youth fell to the ground at once, but he did not get up again and the two tradesmen ran up, crying, "Shame, shame! Seize the fellow."

"You've killed him, Tom, by the Lord," cried the sailor's companion. "You deserve hanging, but get back to the ship if you would escape it—Quick, quick! or they will stop you."

"He was drawing his sword on me!" cried our friend Tom, whose quarrel—not the first—with Master Ned we have already seen, as the ship neared the Isle of Rhé. But not quite confident in the availability of his excuse, he took his companion's advice and began to run, turning the corner of the rue de l'Horloge. One of the tradesmen pursued him, shouting, "Stop him! stop him!" and the malevolent scoundrel had not run thirty yards when he was seized by a strong middle-aged man, who

was walking up the street with an elderly companion and followed by two common men, dressed as porters.

The sailor made a struggle to get free ; but it was in vain, and the shopkeeper who was pursuing, soon made the whole affair known to his captors.

The elderly man with the white beard put one or two questions to the prisoner, to which he received no reply ; for since that untoward event, of the Tower of Babel, the world is no longer of one speech, and Tom was master of no other language than his own.

" Take him to the prison," said the old man, addressing the two men who had been following him ; " do not use him roughly, but see that he does not escape."

" He shall not get away, Master Syndic," replied one of the porters ; and while the Syndic was speaking a few whispered words to his companion, Tom was carried off to durance vile.

The two gentlemen then walked on, with the tradesman by their side, and were soon on the spot where the assault had been committed.

By this time a good many people had gathered round poor Master Ned, and the other English sailor had lifted the lad's head upon his knee while Pierrot was pouring some water on his face. The shopkeeper, to whom the latter had been speaking when the misadventure had occurred, was trying to staunch the blood which flowed from a severe cut on the head; but the moment he saw the Syndic approach, he exclaimed, "Ah, Monsieur Clement Tournon! this poor lad was enquiring for you when that brute felled him."

"Indeed," said the old man, with less appearance of interest than might perhaps have been expected, "leave stopping the blood. It's flow will do him good, and some one carry him to my house, where he shall be well tended."

Pierrot had risen from his knee as the Syndic spoke, and now whispered a word in his

ear, which he evidently thought of much consequence ; but the old man remained unmoved, merely saying, " Not quite so close, my friend. I tell you he shall be well tended. Neighbour Gusson, for charity call two or three of your lads and let them carry the poor boy up to my dwelling."

At this moment the younger and stouter man who had seized and held Master Ned's brutal assailant, suggested that it would be better to take the boy to his dwelling as it was next door but one to the house of the famous physician Cavillac.

"Nay, nay, Guiton," replied the Syndic, "My poor place is hard by, and yours," he added, in a lower tone, "may be too noisy. You go and send down the doctor—though I think the lad is but stunned, and will soon be well again. Pierrot la Grange follow us up, if you be, as you say, his servant—though how he happened to hire such a drunken fellow I know not—Yes, I know you, Master Pierrot, .

though you have forgotten me." Thus saying, he drew the personage whom he had called Guiton aside, and spoke to him during a few moments in a whisper.

In the meantime two or three stout apprentices had been called forth from the neighbouring houses, and the youth, being raised in their arms, was being carried along up the rue de l'Horloge. Clement Tournon followed quickly, leaving his friend Guiton at the corner; and at the tenth door on the left hand side the party stopped and entered the passage of a tall house standing somewhat back from the general line of the street. It was rather a gloomy looking edifice, with small windows and heavy doors, plated on the inner side with iron; but whether sad or cheerful mattered little to poor Master Ned, for the state of stupor in which he lay was not affected by his being borne thither, nor by the still more troublesome task of carrying him up a narrow stairs. That he was not dead his heavy breathing

shewed ; but that was almost the only sign of life which could be discovered by a casual observer.

“ Carry him into the small room behind the saloon,” said Clement Tournon, who was at this time following close, and in another minute the lad was laid upon a bed in a room situated in the back of the house, where little noise could penetrate, and which was cheerful and airy enough.

“ Thank you, lads, thank you !” said the Syndic, speaking to the apprentices ; “ now leave us. You, Pierrot la Grange, stay here, undress him, and get him between the sheets.”

The noise, and the little crowd going up the steps, had brought forth several women servants, in large helmet-shaped white caps, belonging to Monsieur Tournon's household ; and after gazing in silence for a moment or two with wonder and compassion upon the handsome pale countenance, all covered with blood, of the poor lad, they began to make

numerous suggestions to their master, who answered nothing, but inquired, "Where is Lucette?"

She was gone, they told him, to Madame Loraine's school; and then, rejecting all their counsels, and merely telling them that Doctor Cavillac would soon be there, he ordered the room to be cleared of every one but Pierrot and himself.

The old Syndic paused for a moment or two after his commands had been obeyed, gazing upon the pale face before him with a look of greater interest than he had yet suffered to appear upon his countenance. Then suddenly turning to Pierrot, he said, "Now tell me all you know about this youth. Who is he? What did he come hither for? What is his business with me?"

"What is his business with you, Monsieur Tournon, I do not know," replied Pierrot la Grange, "What he came hither for was to bring letters or messages from England, and

as to who and what he is, or was, that is very simple. He is Lord Montagu's page."

"And his name?" asked the Syndic.

"We used to call him Master Ned," replied Pierrot. "That was when I was with the English army in the Isle de Rhé, but his name, by rights, I believe, is Edward Langdale." The old man continued silent, and Pierrot, whose tendency to loquacity easily broke bounds, went on to tell how Etienne Jargeau had received, some fortnight before, intimation that Master Ned would arrive upon the coast on business of importance, about three days before he did arrive, with directions to have a small beacon fire lighted that night, and every night after, on a small hill just above the *trou bourbê*, till the lad appeared. "You know, Jargeau used to be a retainer of the Prince de Soubise, Monsieur," Pierrot continued, "but of late he has left his service and has gone over—some say bought—to the French party."

"I trust we are all of the true French party,"

replied Monsieur Tournon. "But the lad landed last night, you say. Had he no baggage with him?"

"Yes, two large leather bags, with padlocks on them," rejoined Pierrot, "they are left safe under lock and key at Coq d'Or, where we were obliged to sleep last night, because the guard was so sound asleep that we could not wake them to let us in."

"Ay, so sluggardly. This must be amended," said the Syndic. "At the Coq d'Or, in the suburb? That is no safe place for such bags."

"So I was just thinking," replied Pierrot, "I will go up and fetch them. He has got the key of the room in his pocket."

The worthy gentleman made a movement towards the bed, as if to take the key; but Clement Tournon stopped him, saying, with a somewhat sarcastic smile, "If the Coq d'Or is no safe depository, Pierrot la Grange is no safe messenger."

The man's face flushed. "You do me wrong, Sir;" he exclaimed, "bad enough I

may be, but I never stole a thing in my life."

"Not a cup of brandy?" asked the Syndic, with another smile.

Pierrot laughed. "Fair booty, fair booty!" he said; "strong waters are fair booty everywhere, Monsieur."

"Well I suspect you of nothing worse," replied Tournon, "but if you were once to go for the bags, Heaven knows when we should see you again; and then you would come without the bags; for there would be plenty of people to lighten you of your load. Beside, the people of the Cabaret would not let you take them. I will send my head polisher with you, and give him an order to receive the baggage, in my name. They dare not refuse my order. Get the key gently, I do not love putting my hands in other people's pockets."

As soon as the key had been obtained, Clement Tournon led his companion into a large, curious-looking apartment on the floor below, where, round the room, appeared a

number of dingy glass-cases, through the small panes of which came the gleam of various articles of gold and silver, while in different parts of the room were several anvils and workbenches, with some half dozen men filing and hammering and polishing. Near the window was a tall desk, within a sort of iron cage, and two clerks writing. Everything was orderly in the house of Clement Tournon, and, advancing to one of the scribes, he directed him to write the order he had promised, saw it written, and signed it, and then called a strong, middle-aged man from a bench, whom he ordered to accompany Pierrot to the tavern and return with him. He then took his way back to the little room behind the great saloon, and sat down by the bedside of Master Ned, murmuring, "Poor boy, poor boy! He reminds me of my own poor Albert."

Ere five minutes were over he was joined by the physician, a man celebrated in his day, well advanced in years, and with that peculiar

look of mysterious, uncompromising solemnity which many a doctor still affects, and which was then as necessary to the profession as rhubarb. As a description of medical treatment in those times, though it might prove in some degree interesting to those who are fond of picking the bare bone of antiquity, would neither interest nor instruct the general reader, I will pass over in silence all the means resorted to in the case of Master Ned. I only know that cataplasms were applied to the soles of his feet, and that some blood was taken from his arm. The doctor, after examination, declared that the skull was not fractured, which might well have been the case, for by a curious arrangement of nature, those whose brains are the best worth preserving, have uniformly the thinnest cases to put them into.

No, the skull was not fractured, Monsieur Cavillac said; but the lad had received a severe concussion of the brain, which was sometimes worse. He however held out good

hope, though he told the Syndic that he did not anticipate any change till the sun went down, and read him a lecture upon the effects of the various changes of the moon, and even of the day, upon the human frame, assuring him—a fact in which many still believe—that a scotched viper never dies till the sun sets.

After he was gone, Clement Tournon took care to have all the directions carried out to the letter, and the cataplasms had just been prepared and applied when Pierrot and the polisher returned with the bags.

“Take him below,” said the Syndic, addressing his workman, and indicating Pierrot by a nod of his head towards him, “take him below and let him feed with our people, but take care that he does not get a strong drink. Now, keep this place as quiet as possible; but tell old Marthon to come here in half an hour, for I have affairs, and must go at that time.”

“Can I not stay and attend upon my young master?” asked Pierrot, in a respectful tone.

"No," said the Syndic, dryly, "men who drink are always noisy."

When left alone, with the door shut, what imaginations came upon the good old merchant! "Would that I knew the lad's errand," he thought, and his eyes turned towards the bags, which had been set down at the foot of the bed. "His letters must be in there," said Tournon, to himself, "and the key of the padlocks is doubtless in his pocket."

Ah, M. Syndic, it is a moment of temptation.

"Perhaps his business is a matter of life and death, and an hour even may be of vast consequence to me, to the city, to the Protestant cause. Indeed it must be so, or they never would have sent him over in such stormy weather." So said fancy—a quality much more nearly allied to curiosity than people think—and Clement Tournon rose from his seat. But the fine moral sense that was in him interfered, "No, never," he said, "No,

never ; I will not touch them so long as he lives. They shall not be fingered by any one in my house."

Still he felt strongly tempted, and after a while he rose again, and went to call Marthon, feeling it would be better for him not to remain in that room alone. His large capped, pippin-faced attendant was then duly imbued with all the Doctor's directions, warned to change the cataplasms every two hours, and to keep the wet cloths on the head cool, and then Clement Tournon walked forth from his house, towards the fine old town hall.

Marthon sat and sewed. The invalid did not stir, and an hour passed by. "It must be time to change the cataplasms," she thought, "he will not wake till I come back, would to Heaven he could, poor lad," and down she went to the kitchen, where what she needed had been left to keep warm.

In the meantime we may as well look about

the room. It was a very pretty little chamber, well and even luxuriously furnished withal. Two windows looked out to the back court, and the sunshine came in over a lower house behind. The rays first fell upon a small writing desk of dark carved oak, then touched upon a small bookcase in the same style, well provided with books, and then upon a large armoire, as it was then called, or wardrobe as we should now term it. There was also a corner cupboard, also richly carved, with a glass door on two sides, shewing a number of little nicknacks, selected with great taste, some ivory figures, exquisitely cut, and a child's sampler of not the best needlework.

Suddenly the door opened, and with a quick step, but so light that one could not hear a foot-fall, there entered a creature that seemed like a dream, or a fairy, or a wreath of morning mist, with fancy to shape it into the form of a young girl. She could not yet be fully fifteen years of age, but yet there were traces of early

womanhood in neck and shoulders, and rounded limbs. But we shall have to describe her hereafter, and here we only stop to speak of the look of strange surprise, that opened the long, blue, deeply-fringed eyes more wide, and expanded the nostrils of the delicate nose, and raised the arched eye-brow, and showed the pearl-like teeth between the rosy lips, as she beheld the pale, and bloody figure of the poor lad lying upon her own bed. She stood for a moment in silent astonishment, and then was approaching slowly on tiptoe—as if her foot could have made any noise—towards the bedside, when a soft voice behind her, said, “Lucette.”

She started and turned round, and the old Syndic, who stood in the doorway, beckoned her into the passage beyond, “My dear child,” he said, “I have been obliged to give your room to a poor young lad, who has been sadly hurt, because it was the only one where he could have perfect quiet. I will put you in

the blue room, on the other side, where you may have some noise, but I know your good heart will not let you feel annoyed at giving up your chamber for a day or two, to him and our good Marthon, who has to nurse him."

"I will nurse him myself," said the young girl, "or at least help Marthon. Annoyed, grandfather! Could you think I would be at all annoyed in such a case as his. Poor fellow! I will go and speak to him," and before the old man could tell her that it was in vain, she ran up to the bedside and said, in a low, sweet voice, "Be of good cheer, young gentleman, we will nurse and tend you till you are quite well."

Her lips almost touched his ear as she spoke, and whether it was that her soft breath fanned him sweetly, or that the sound of a woman's tongue had something that found a way to his heart when even hearing failed, Ned Langdale turned suddenly in his bed, murmuring, "Mother—dear mother, do not leave me!"

CHAPTER V.

ABOUT nine o'clock in the evening the invalid wakened to a consciousness of existence—but how wild and strange a consciousness. His speech was incoherent, his eye vague and wandering. He seemed to make vehement efforts to recover the power of thought and reason, but it was all in vain. If in answer to a question he uttered a few connected words, the next instant all was confused and senseless in the attempt at a sentence ; and when

Dr. Cavillac visited him, at half-past ten, his pulse was beating as if it would have burst the artery, and his eyes were blood-shot and wild.

“Perfect silence—absence of light—diet and bloodletting,” said the doctor, “Those are the only means to save him. Thank Heaven he is finely delirious! He can neither understand nor try to answer any question. If he could but reason and talk he were a dead youth. Now mark me, Syndic, let there be a finger on every lip, let every body in your house be dumb for the next three days. If he speaks do not answer him. If he does not speak, keep silence. Give him the drinks I told you; and to-morrow I will bleed him again. In three days we shall know more, and probably at that time he will recover his senses—it may be for life—it may be for death; but all depends upon good nursing.”

The prognosis of the physician was verified. At the end of three days Edward Langdale

did recover his senses; but some events had taken place in the meantime, which must be noticed before we follow his history further. We must in the first place begin with that most interesting personage, Master Pierrot, who is going to be introduced in a new character—that of a philosopher. Although the press very generally assumes the form of majesty, and indulges in the plural number, probably in the proud consciousness of its sovereign power over the minds, and perhaps the bodies, of a certain number of human beings, it was with no such vain confidence that the last sentence began, “We must,” &c. That formula was merely adopted to include you and me, dear reader, who, having to jog over a good space of country together, had better agree upon our line of travel before we set out upon each day’s journey. It was therefore merely a sort of suggestion on my part that we should first look after Pierrot, and to be understood as implying nothing more.

Now during the last few hours Pierrot had met with a number of severe mortifications—those somewhat severe lessons of life which sometimes do a man a great deal of good. In the first place, poor Master Ned had in very plain language told him that he was a coward when drunk, if he was a brave man when sober, and as there was a certain consciousness in Pierrot's breast that there was a good deal of truth in the lad's assertion, of course the accusation was the more unpalatable. Secondly, the conduct of Clement Tournon showed him that one bad habit could deprive, and had deprived him of the last scrap of confidence amongst people of any character; and lastly, the refusal to let him even attend upon his young master, shewed that even his fidelity and affection were doubted. Now Pierrot was really an affectionate fellow, and this mortified him more than anything else. It is probable that many a time in life—since by an evil practice he had lost wealth, and station, and

consideration—Pierrot had resolved to cast the vice from him—he might have so resolved a hundred or a hundred and fifty times; but he had never kept his resolution. Never before, however, had any one doubted his qualities of heart; and now, with a good deal of time to spare—in fact it was all to spare, as he sat in the kitchen or passages of the Syndic's house—he bestowed the golden superfluity upon thought. His mind was not naturally a weak one—though there is no denying it had been weakened by intemperance; and it was now making a great effort. “So,” he said to himself, “I am not even to be trusted in the sick boy's room. Well, that is somewhat hard!—No, it is not; the old man is quite right. He knows I am a drunken rascal, and thinks I am not to be trusted in any thing. Hang me if I have not a mind to make him think better of me. But it is of no use. I should only begin again. Why need I begin again at all? Master Ned knows me better than any of them,

and he only requires me not to drink when there is anything important in the wind. He knows I cannot help it at other times. But why cannot I help it at other times if I can help it then. I can help it if I like, and by Heaven I will not drink any more—except when he gives me leave—and I'll ask him never to give me leave. So we will settle the matter that way. I do love that lad, though he gave me a shot in the leg to keep me from running away and disgracing myself. I did not drink one drop last night at the inn, because he told me not. I am mighty sick at my stomach, however. I wish I had a drop of brandy, just to settle it—I have a mind to go out and get just one gill to settle it—only one gill. No, I won't, for then I should take another, and so forth. It shall not be said that my young master was lying sick and I went and got drunk. Let my stomach take care of itself, and if it chooses to be sick, it must be so. I wonder if he will die, poor boy; he has a good heart, though he is as hasty as a tinker's cur, and as stern

as a general. Marthon," he continued, to the good woman who entered, seeking something, "how is Master Ned?"

"Much the same, Pierrot," answered Marthon, "the doctor says there will be no change yet awhile."

"Marthon, I am resolved not to drink any more," said Pierrot, in a solemn tone.

"Keep to it," she replied with a laugh, but evidently with very little confidence. "Why Pierrot la Grange, for the last ten years, you have been for ever at the flask. You were a very good young man before that, and well to do—ay, and a handsome man too. I have seldom seen a more personable man than you were then, before you took to that filthy custom of making a beast of yourself; but now your face is all over blotches, and your nose is so red, you might fire a cannon with it."

"Well, well, you shall see, Marthon," rejoined Pierrot, "I have taken a resolution, and fallen upon a plan by which I can keep it too; and

you may tell the Syndic, that I will drink no more. Why, just now I thought to go out, and get myself some brandy, with a spur rial, as he calls it, which Master Ned gave me, because I am sick at the stomach, but I resisted, and would not stir a step on account of my resolution."

"Ah, are you sick at the stomach?" said Marthon, quietly, "suppose I get you a little cloves and strong waters?"

Pierrot evidently hesitated; but then he suddenly exclaimed, "Not a drop, Marthon, thank you, not a drop. I was once sober for three whole days, and I dare say should have continued so, but that fellow Jargeau, got hold of me, and persuaded me to drink. It was his cue to make me drunk then. So those who know me will never ask me to take a drop if they love me."

"That they certainly will not," said Marthon, going away with what she had come to fetch.

Her conversation with Pierrot, had one good

effect however. She told her master, that she really believed La Grange intended not to drink any more; not only inasmuch as he told her so, but because he refused a glass of cloves and strong waters, which she had offered him, because he was sick at the stomach.

"Most likely sick because he has not had his morning's draught," said Clement Tournon. "However, encourage all good resolutions, and do not offer him any more, Marthon. I will speak with him myself in the course of the day, and can judge better than you can."

The worthy Syndic could not keep his own purpose, however. The day passed over, and he did not see Pierrot; for the town of Rochelle was in a considerable agitation at that time, the events passing round it being sufficiently menacing to impress all minds with anxiety, but not sufficiently urgent to produce unanimity by the presence of immediate danger.

Pierrot kept his resolution, however, and the day passed by, without his having tasted any

fluid stronger than water. The next morning, though he did not feel himself altogether comfortable, his nausea had departed, and he was more bold in his purpose. About ten he was sent for to speak with the Syndic, who was much too wise a man to ask him questions which had any relation to brandy. Clement Tournon, however, examined him closely, in regard to his knowledge of Edward Langdale, what letters he brought, when he had sailed from England, whether the intimations Jargeau had received, had been accompanied by no information of the young man's objects in coming to Rochelle.

"He had a long and stormy passage, that I know," answered Pierrot, "and as to Jargeau, if he had any information, he kept it to himself, as he always does. But you can ask him yourself, Syndic. Whether the lad had any letters, you should know better than I do, for if he have, they must be in his bags, and you

have had the bags and keys too, in your hands these two days, when I have never had either at all."

"I pry not where I have no right," replied Clement Tournon, coldly, "no hand opens his bags while he is alive, and in my house. As for Jargeau, he sees not matters as I do, or I would ask him for information. The Lord Montague I do not know, though you say the youth is his page, and I cannot divine why that lord has sent him to me. Indeed I heard his lordship was in France."

"But he is the great Duke of Buckingham's right hand," said Pierrot, "and perhaps Master Ned has been sent to you by the Duke."

"I have some suspicion it may be so," answered the Syndic. "I once had some diamond pendants made for him in great haste, and perhaps he wishes to employ me again."

"In making cannon balls this time, perhaps, Monsieur," said Pierrot drily; but to his

surprise, the Syndic answered quite calmly "Perhaps so, for I am told, that this morning, at daybreak, a fleet of ships of war, was descried standing in towards Rochelle, and the people thought it was under English colours."

He looked keenly at Pierrot, as he spoke, but the countenance of the latter at once shewed that he had not been trying to deceive any one as to the amount of his knowledge; and he clapped his hands, exclaiming, "Hurrah! We shall have some stirring times again then, and shall not have to lie here cooped up like rats in a trap, but have fighting every day and ——"

"Plenty of brandy," said the Syndic, finishing the sentence for him.

"Not a drop, upon my salvation!" said Pierrot.

"Well, your salvation may a good deal depend upon your keeping that resolution," replied the Syndic, "for a man does many things when he is drunk for which drunken-

ness can be no excuse, though it may be an aggravation—but hark! What is that? It was a cannon shot, was it not? The fleet must be nearing the town. I must to the council. Well, you may go in and see the young gentleman. But mind, be as still as death. Say nothing to him, and if he recognizes you and asks you any questions, answer shortly and quietly, and leave him. You said he was of gentle birth, I think—you are sure he is of gentle birth?"

Though Pierrot might, and in fact did think it strange that a merchant of Rochelle should lay such a stress upon gentle, otherwise noble birth, he assured the Syndic, from what he had seen of the English, that all the household pages of British noblemen were selected from good families; and while they were still speaking together, one of the goldsmith's apprentices came to call the Syndic to the city council, telling that a boat had just landed from the English fleet.

Clement Tournon called for his gown and chain; and, after giving repeated directions to Pierrot, as to his demeanour in the chamber of Master Ned, and donned his robes in the man's presence, he proceeded to the fine old Town Hall, followed by two of his men.

The inclinations, if not the affections, of Pierrot, were divided. He would fain have gone to the hall, to hear the news of the day—news, as it proved, much more important, than he dreamed of. But then again came the thought of his poor young master, and being a conscientious man when he was sober, and sometimes a conscientious man even when he was drunk, he fancied it a duty to visit Master Ned. He soon found, however, that he could do nothing in the world for him. The lad's mind still wandered terribly, and though he gave some indications of recollecting Pierrot, he asked him no questions, and called him "My Lord Duke." Pierrot might then have turned his steps to the Hall, but, in one of

Ned's half-muttered speeches, the name of Jargeau was uttered, and remembering that that personage would inevitably be at the place of meeting, he thought it better to wait for tidings till the Syndic returned.

The news came soon enough for Pierrot's mortification; and immediately spread through the whole house. It was to the effect that the Lord Denbigh, in command of a powerful British fleet, had come to offer assistance to the town of Rochelle; that there had been a warm, and even angry debate in the council, but in the end the anti-English party had prevailed, and all that Tournon and Guiton could obtain was, that a civil reply should be made to the English admiral, thanking him and King Charles for their proffered aid, but declining it on the score that *no previous intimation had been given to the citizens of the approach of a fleet to their port.*

CHAPTER VI.

" Sweet chimes the bell,
 " O'er slope and woodland pealing,
" Mellowed by distance to a tranquil sound ;
 " Sweetly the rill,
 " Through moss-bank gently stealing,
 " Speaks peace around.

" Calm sinks the sun
 " Unto his golden slumber,
" And folds the clouds around his radiant head ;
 " Up springs the moon :
 " Her star-train without number
 " Say naught is dead !

" All live again,
" Although their life be hidden
" For the short space of earth's dominion here ;
" By Heaven's own voice
" The soul of man is bidden
" To hope 'midst fear.

" All nature's works,
" Though into ashes turning,
" Fill the whole heart with a consoling voice
" Be ready man,
" And with the lamp still burning
" Watch and rejoice."

So sang Lucette—or rather such is a very poor translation of her song. At the best it was but an old ditty, composed, probably, by some of the early protestants of France. It may have been written by Clement Marot, or his friend, the poet and printer, Lyon Jamets, for aught I know. It is so long since I have read the works of either, that I have forgotten somewhat more than half of all their pens produced.

However, so sang Lucette, in the chamber now assigned to Edward Langdale, while Marthon sat beside her, knitting, and, from

time to time, fixing her eyes upon the face of the invalid.

It may seem strange that Lucette should choose such a time, and such a place to indulge in music, though her voice was marvellously sweet, and had been cultivated to a degree rare in those days—and people who have sweet voices, well cultivated, and moreover the love, the spirit, the inspiration of music in them, are fond of breaking forth into song at very unseasonable times.

But, as it happened, it was not an unseasonable time, as Lucette herself explained to Clement Tournon. When she turned her head, after her song had ended, to take up her embroidery frame, she saw the old Syndic standing in the doorway, looking somewhat surprised to hear her voice then and there, but perfectly quiet and still. Without a word she rose, and noiselessly approached the door, saying, in a very low voice, "He is better. He has been speaking sensibly; but he grew

drowsy after a moment, and fell asleep quite calmly, murmuring, 'Sing to me, mother—sing to me,' as if he did not well know where he was. So I thought it best to humour him."

"You did right, my child," replied the Syndic, putting his hand upon her head, round which the light brown hair, with golden gleams upon it, was wound in many a long silky tress; the doctor is below; I hear his step coming along the passage."

Why all doctors should have creaking shoes. I never could divine; but it is clearly an idiosyncrasy. They cannot help it. Perhaps the leather gets affected by the close air of sick men's chambers—perhaps it becomes imbued with sighs and groans—a novel sort of tanning, but one well calculated to give a creaking sound—or perhaps the doctors themselves carry so far the necessary precaution of warming their nethermost coverings that the material becomes too dry, and cries out for very thirst.

However that may be—and I will not venture to decide the question—Doctor Cavillac's shoes did creak most lamentably ; but they had no effect upon the slumber of the poor invalid.

The Doctor, the Syndic, and Lucette spoke together for a few moments at the door ; but Cavillac did not go in. It is likely that he was conscious of noisy feet. " It is critical," he said. " Do not disturb him for the world, but let him sleep as long as he will. Let him be well watched ; and when he wakes, speak low and gently to him ; give him a few spoonfuls of good old wine, for he will be as weak as a child, and then let me know. You had better watch, my pretty Lucette, for there is no such good nurse as a young girl with a kind heart, except an old woman who does not drink—and she is apt to have the rheumatism."

" But, Doctor, Lucette must have repose, and these sleeps sometimes last very long," said Clement Tournon. " I must not—I am bound not to let fatigue affect her own health."

"I am not the least tired, dear father," said Lucette, with a bright look, "his first sensible word did me more good than a whole night's sleep. Do you think, Doctor, that he will wake in his right mind again?"

"Certainly, my dear," answered the other, "I am sure he will; but his recovery may be slow, and require much care."

"Then I will watch till he does wake," answered the beautiful young girl. "I will watch as hopefully as ever Egyptian did to hear the morning voice of Memnon."

"Listen to the little Pagan," said Cavillac, with a smile. "But I will tell you a better plan, my child. He certainly will not wake for some hours, you may see that by his great paleness. You go and lie down for a few hours. Then let Marthon call you. Come with me, Syndic, I wish to speak with you," and he drew the old man to the top of the stairs.

"Have you heard," he said, "that the Cardinal has sent down a thousand men to com-

plete the lines round about us? This is growing serious."

"It is indeed!" said Clement Tournon, with a very sad look, "and those rash men, either from obstinacy and rash confidence, or jealousy, and perhaps treachery, rejected yesterday the offer of succour from England, and the fleet has sailed away."

"We should have had an hospital for fools, long ago," said Cavillac. "It is the great want of the city. But there are other things to be attended to now. Send out everywhere for stores, my good friend, if you spend the last livre of the city money. Depend upon it this Cardinal will try to starve us out."

"He cannot do that while our port is open," answered the Syndic.

"How long will it be open?" asked the physician, with a very meaning look. "I have heard a whisper, my friend, that he will find means to close it, either by a fleet from all the neighbouring ports, or in some other way."

Look to it—look to it! there is less time to spare than the men of Rochelle fancy.” Thus saying, he left Clement Tournon meditating in no very hopeful mood over the state of the city, and the prospect—clear as a picture to his calm, reasoning eye—of all those horrors that were but too soon to fall upon unhappy Rochelle. The house soon fell into profound silence; the hours of labour were over, the sound of hammer, tongues and file were still, and in about an hour Clement Tournon took his place by Edward Langdale’s bedside, sending good old Marthon to seek some repose herself. Twilight faded away into darkness; a little silver lamp was trimmed and shaded, in the corner of the chamber, and two or three hours passed in silence, the good old man nodding from time to time, but never giving way to sleep.

At length the light step of Lucette was heard in the deep stillness—it could not have been heard had there been the buzzing of a

fly—and, approaching the bed, she gazed and listened.

“He is sleeping sweetly,” she said to the old man, “how differently he breathes now. I can hardly hear him. Marthon will be here in a minute—leave him to us, Father, and take some rest yourself.”

“As soon as she comes,” said the Syndic. “What is the hour?”

“The great clock has just struck one,” answered Lucette.

“I was dreamy, and did not hear it,” said the Syndic. “Have the wine near, Lucette, and give him a spoonful at once when he wakes.”

He made a movement towards the other side of the room as he spoke, and Lucette took his place in the large chair; but hardly was she seated when a voice was heard from the bed which made her start. “Where am I?” asked Edward Langdale, “What has happened to me?”

"You are with dear friends," replied the sweet voice of Lucette at once, "you have met with a little accident; but you are recovering fast. Here take a spoonful of wine. The Doctor orders it."

"I will take any thing you give me," said the lad, "for I feel very weak."

"Hush! silence, silence!" said Lucette in a low, but cheerful tone. "You are to keep quiet, and take some wine from time to time, and try to sleep again, to-morrow you will be quite well, I doubt not."

So saying she poured the wine quietly between his lips; but the poor lad could not refrain from saying, "That is very well, and you are very kind." It is probable he would have added, "and very beautiful," if he could have descried in the dim light, more than the faint outline of that fair face and form; but Lucette replied, "I shall think you very *unkind* if you say one word more, except to ask for what you want."

"You understand it better than I do, Lucette, I see," said the old Syndic, in a whisper. "Woman, woman, for such tasks no hands are like hers! but here comes Marthon; and I will leave you."

The youth gazed after him as he departed, and looked at Marthon curiously, as she moved slowly about the room; but his eyes found something more satisfactory in the form of Lucette, although he could distinguish little except that it was something graceful, and more of his own age, while from time to time, she poured the wine between his lips. He was feeble, however, and inclined to sleep, and, before good Dr. Cavillac, roused out of his bed, came to visit him, his eyes were again closed, and he had relapsed into slumber.

It is one of the strange, but frequent results of a disease, or accident of any kind, which affects the brain, to blot out, as it were, from memory, all the events which have taken place

within a certain preceding period. It is sometimes a long, sometimes a short period, according to circumstances, not very easily reduced to any rule. I have known a man lose a language, with which he has been for years familiar, and remember one which he had long forgotten. I have known memory acutely distinct in regard to events which had occurred a month or two before, and a perfect blank as to those more recent.

Edward Langdale recollected nothing beyond a certain day, when he had sped over, from the town of Antwerp to London, bearing intelligence from the Lord Montagu to the Duke of Buckingham, even after he had perfectly recovered his senses and some degree of strength, on the day following that night, when the delirium first left him. By degrees, however, confused images of after-things began to present themselves—his voyage from Portsmouth—the storms which had baffled and delayed his course—even the approach to Rochelle, came back indistinctly. It only

wanted, in fact, the ringing of the bell, to cause the curtain of oblivion to rise, and the whole scene of the past to be re-ënacted before the eyes of memory.

There is nothing in the physical world at all like the sudden flash of illumination carried along the many links which bind event to event in a chain almost invisible, except the operation of the Electric Telegraph. One touch applied, establishing the connection, by the smallest possible point and thought—living thought flashes on to its object, setting at naught time, and space, and obstacle.

The connecting touch, in the case of Master Ned, was destined to be the sudden appearance in his chamber of our friend Pierrot, who came in both to see his young new Master, and to speak with good Clement Tournon. The Syndic held up his finger to the man as he entered, as a warning not to trouble the young gentleman with speech, for the lad was still extremely weak, and could hardly turn in

his bed. But the moment Edward Langdale beheld him, he carried his hand suddenly to his head, saying, "Pierrot la Grange! Pierrot la Grange! I remember it all now—good Heaven, and I have been lying here so long—God knows how long, and forgetting the message to Clement Tournon. I must get up, and seek him, Pierrot—get me my clothes, I must get up."

"Lie still, lie still!" said the old Syndic, "Clement Tournon is here, my young friend, I am he, but we can have no talk now, for the Physician says you must still remain quite quiet, and without agitation of any kind."

"If you be Clement Tournon," answered the youth it will agitate me more to be silent than to speak—but speak I must, if I die, come hither, nearer, I pray you, sir. Bend down your head. Do you remember certain pendants of diamonds, and the man you made them for. If so, give his name in a low voice."

"The most gracious Duke of Buckingham," said the Syndic, in a whisper.

"Then he bids me tell you," said Master Ned, "That his brother-in-law, the Earl of Denbigh, will be here in three days, with a puissant fleet, and he begs you to prepare the minds of the citizens, to give him a worthy reception; for he hears you are somewhat divided here, I have more to say but that is the burden of it all. Pray lose no time. Good Heaven, three days! How long have I been here?"

Clement Tournon's face assumed an expression of deep, and even painful thought for one moment, but he replied in a calm, well-assured tone. "Give yourself no uneasiness my son. The whole has been settled, notwithstanding the accident that happened to you. We will talk about these matters more to-morrow. At present I must leave you, for I have business of importance to transact, but Marthon will tend you carefully; and Lucette will come and sing to you, if you like it."

Do not let us pause upon the convalescence of our young friend, but for the present, at least, let us follow Clement Tournon's movements, which had some results at an after period. He took his course straight to the City prison, into the dark mysteries of which we need not pry.

Every prison was in those days hideous, and this, like others had its dungeons and cells, one hour's tenancy of which was a punishment hardly merited by aught but murder. There was, moreover, what we should now call a justice room, in the jail—at least a place where justice or injustice was administered, according to the character of the magistrate who presided.

There Clement Tournon seated himself, by the side of one of the other magistrates of the town, and Tom, the sailor, was brought before them. He was followed by one of his companions, and by the Captain of the little vessel, which still lay in the port—while the two tradesmen, who had witnessed the assault, were

likewise present. The faces of the two magistrates were grave, and even stern, and, probably, had Master Tom shewn a swaggering and insolent air, such as he not unfrequently bore, they might have dealt hardly with him. But Tom was one of those men whom we not unfrequently meet with, and who though apt to bully, and even to fight, when he thought there was some advantage on his side, was easily cowed and depressed when he knew or believed, that there were odds or even equality, on the other side. Besides, he had now been kept for several days in what modern writers would call a loathsome cell, fed upon bread and water, and had no companion but solitude. Now beef and good company are great promoters of swagger, and the absence of both had terribly reduced Tom's usual tone. He was indeed inclined to whimper, pleaded that he and Master Ned had quarrelled on board ship, that Ned had attempted to draw sword upon him, and that he himself had been

drinking when he struck the blow. These excuses availed him little with the magistrates, and strange to say, he found no support either from his captain or the man who had been his companion. The latter bore testimony that when he first laid hands on the lad's shoulder, he told him "that he had got him safe on shore now, and would thrash him soundly;" and the captain merely said, "I trust your honors will liberate this man and put him in my hands. I warned him more than once on the voyage, to let the young gentleman alone. I suspect he has done more mischief than he knows, and if you give him up to me I will put him in irons till I get home, and then give him up to those who will deal with him severely enough."

"The young gentleman is in a fair way of recovery," replied the Syndic, who understood the language in which the skipper spoke; "but a serious offence has been committed in the streets of the city of Rochelle; and we should certainly punish this man ourselves were it

not for the honor and respect that we bear to the king of England. Much mischief he certainly has done, as those who sent Master Edward Langdale hither, will probably know by this time. But, Captain, if you demand the prisoner, in the name of King Charles, and promise to convey full intelligence of all that has occurred, to those who are best qualified to judge of the case, and to give this man up to them, I will speak with my friend here, who understands no English, but who probably will agree with me that our reverence for your sovereign requires us to follow your suggestion."

The Captain willingly promised all that was demanded, and sealed his assurance with an oath, and the prisoner was then placed in his custody.

"And now, Captain, when do you set sail?" asked Clement Tournon, "the wind is now fair and the weather fine."

"I cannot go before Master Ned tells me,"

said the Captain, "my cutter is to be at his orders till he has done with her."

"I know not that he can yet write even his name," said the Syndic, "but you can come up to my house, where he now lies, this evening, and if the physician permits, he can speak with you."

"See what you have done, you d——d scoundrel," said the Captain, turning sharply toward Tom, "I will be up at your house, sir, by five, and hope the young gentleman will let me go, for I am tired of this voyage."

The following morning, at daybreak, the little craft got under weigh, bearing a letter, in Clement Tournon's hand, and Edward Langdale remained alone in France.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the calm lapses in turbulent and turbid stream of life, which Heaven sometimes graciously affords us—the short breathing spaces in the race—the calm pauses in the battle, how sweet how comforting they are ! Such a pause had fallen upon the city of Rochelle, and all its inhabitants. True there were individual griefs and sufferings ; the door of the closet, with the skeleton in it, can never be altogether shut. But to the city generally,

and to its denizens generally, there was a lull in the storm. It was no where more pleasantly felt than in the house of good Clement Tournon. He was a calm, a very calm man—had been so all his life. He had met with sorrows, which had touched him deeply; but he had borne them calmly. He had known pleasures, but he had enjoyed them calmly. He had mingled with angry parties, and seen strife and bloodshed, but he had been calm, through all, and that very calmness—which by the way, is one of the most impressive qualities, in regard to our fellow men, which any one can possess—had won for him great reverence upon the part of his neighbours.

Young Edward Langdale too shared in the temporary tranquillity. "Sweet are the uses of adversity." It is a good text and a true one also, if we use the adversity wisely; but sometimes we do not, and although Master Ned had known more adversity than most youths of his age, we must acknowledge that he had

found it all very sour, and had not had wisdom enough to find honey in the stony rock. He had been hardened, sharpened, rendered stern in the rough school through which he had passed. His character must have seemed to the reader somewhat harsh and remorseless—at least so I intended it to appear. But he had now suffered a long and heavy sickness, his frame was still feeble, his activity, for the time, at least, was lost; and some traits in his character which seemed to have been smothered by coarser things, revived and shone out. There was a latent poetry in his nature; a love and appreciation of all that was beautiful, a sense of harmony and a delight in music, together with those strong affections which are so often combined with strength of character. These, in the body's feebleness, asserted their power. Strange how it is that the corporeal and the mental wage such continual warfare upon each other! But even at times when the bodily force and the strong will had poss-

essed the most perfect sway, and given him command and rule over men much older and higher than himself, these qualities of heart and mind, though latent, had acted unseen to win affection also.

Six days after his arrival in Rochelle, the little saloon in Clement Tournon's house presented as calm and pleasant a scene as ever the eye rested upon. There was the old man himself, with his small velvet cap upon his head, and there was Master Ned leaning back in a large chair, with the hue of returning health coming back into his cheeks—always a pleasant sight—and there was beautiful Lucette, who had just been singing to the two, and who was now sitting on a low foot-stool, with her fair delicate hand resting on the head of a lute. A beautiful silver lamp, with three burners, modelled from those graceful lamps which we see in the hands of the Tuscan peasantry, gave light to the chamber; for the wax tapers, in two exquisitely-wrought candlesticks, had been

extinguished, to save the eyes of Master Ned from the glare ; and a water-pitcher and goblet, finely shaped from the antique, and covered with grotesque figures, stood on a little table at the youth's left hand, to cool his lips, still dry and hot from his recent illness.

The eyes of Edward Langdale were fixed upon these specimens of the old Syndic's art, and he was expressing his admiration of the delicacy and fineness of the designs, when Lucette observed, quietly,—

“He has much more beautiful things than those, Master Ned. I wish, father, I might bring and shew him the pix, that was sent from Rome.”

“Do so, my child,” said Tournon, “and hark, Lucette——”

He whispered a word in the young girl's ear, and she left the room, but returned in a minute or two, bringing with her two objects in soft leathern covers, one of which was a

pix, probably from the hands of Benvenuto Cellini.

Edward took it from her hands and admired it greatly, gazing at the various curious arabesques with which it was decorated, and at the medallions, displaying exquisitely chiselled figures, while the old Syndic untied the other cover, and took forth a large cup or hanap, of pure gold, only ornamented by a row of precious stones, which encircled it in a sort of garland. Master Ned rose feebly to lay the pix upon the table, but the moment his eyes lighted on the cup, he stood still, gazing at it as if sight had suspended every other faculty. "Good Heaven," he exclaimed, at length, addressing the merchant, who was watching him closely, "where did you get that?"

"I bought it, some four years ago, when I was in England," answered Clement Tournon. "Something seems to surprise you. Did you ever see it before?"

"See it!" exclaimed Master Ned, "yes,

often, my good friend—ay several times every year, since I could see anything, till just four years ago last Martinmass. Every birthday—every festival day—it was brought forth; for it must be the same. Oh yes! Is there not Edward Langdale engraved on one side of the foot, and Buckley Hall upon the other?”

“There is,” said the Syndic, “and that is the very reason I told Lucette to bring it. I wished to ask you if you are any relation of those Langdales of Buckley Hall. Edward Langdale!—The two names are the same.”

“They are indeed,” said Master Ned, “That cup is mine, my good friend—at least it ought to be—it and much more, which is now lost to me for ever.”

“If it ought to be, it is thine still, my son,” said the old Syndic, “now God forbid that I should withhold the rightful property of another. But tell us how all this happened. Let me hear what you can recollect of your own life and fate. I know something of Buckley Hall,

for it was in Huntingdon I bought that cup. I would not purchase it at first, because I thought it was stolen—most likely from the court of King James, who was then at Royston—but the goldsmith who had it told me that he had bought it fairly, from Master Richard Langdale, the owner, and showed me a receipt for the money. I would fain hear how all this happened.”

“Not to-night—not to-night,” answered the youth; “the sight of that cup has shaken me much, my father, and to speak of those days would shake me still more in my weak state. To-morrow I shall be stronger, I trust; and then I will tell you all. I have often thought it would do me good if I were to talk over the whole of those sad things with some one, for they only seem to rankle and fester in the silence of my own bosom, and to make me reckless and ill-tempered. But I must get a little better and stronger first. Now I think I will go to bed.”

He turned to go, but then paused, and, taking up the cup, gazed at it earnestly for several minutes, saying,—“ I was just nine years old when my father had my name engraved on it, and gave it to me on my birthday, bidding me never to fill it too full, nor empty it too often.”

“ Wise counsel,” said the old man ; “ but if it be thine, take it my son, I am not a receiver of stolen goods.”

“ No,” said Edward Langdale, “ you knew not that he who sold it had no right to do so ; neither did he from whom you purchased it. Orphans are often wronged, Monsieur Tournon, but I ought not to have been wronged by him who wronged me. Well, to-morrow we will talk more of all these matters.”

A little after nightfall on the following day, the same three sat together in the same room. There had been no music, however, that evening, and Lucette was leaning her fair head upon the old merchant's knee. Edward Langdale

was evidently stronger and better, though he said he had slept but little. Yet there was more color in his cheek and lips, and his face and air had more the usual character of bold, decisive frankness than on the preceding night.

"Now I will tell you my whole story," he said, "beginning with my earliest recollections. Indeed there is not much to tell, and it may be done very shortly."

MASTER NED'S HISTORY.

"Amongst the first of my remembrances is the burning of my father's house. I recollect the house itself quite well, and a very handsome place it was. There were four great octangular towers at the corners—one on the south western side, all covered with ivy, in which a number of cream colored owls used to make their abode, during the day's sunshine. A deer park surrounded the house, full of fern and hawthorne trees, and at the bottom of a bank was the high road, with the river brawling and rushing on by its side.

“Of the interior of the house, I do not remember much, although there is an impression on my mind of large rooms and furniture, which had seen better days. Of the events which there took place, I can recall nothing, till the night of the fire—the great fire as it was called, for many a year; and well it deserved the name; for in its progress it not only destroyed the house; but ate up the buttery which was detached, and consumed the farm buildings and stabling, in which were lost many fine horses, and an immense quantity of agricultural produce.

“I remember on that night, the eighteenth of August, being startled out of my sleep, by loud cries and shrieks, and all sorts of noises—especially a rushing, roaring sound, which frightened me more than all the rest. I was a boy of about seven years old at the time, and sleep clings to one at that age, like a tight garment, so that though I was as it were roused and even alarmed, I was half asleep still. It

was more like an ugly dream than a reality ; and perhaps I might have lain down, and fallen into sound slumber again, had not some one suddenly thrown open the door, rushed to the bed and caught me up in her arms. I saw not distinctly to whose bosom I was pressed, yet I felt sure. Whose could it be, but a mother's ! She ran wildly with me to the door, and there made a short hesitating pause. Then dashed along the corridor, through flames and smoke, ran down the stone steps, out of one of the back doors, upon the smooth lawn behind, and laid me down under a large mulberry tree. Hard by were several persons weeping and wringing their hands ; but amongst them was my little sister, some three years younger than myself. ' He is safe ! He is safe ! ' cried my mother, ' run some one, and tell Sir Richard.'

" My father, who was at that time about forty years of age, joined us in a few minutes, kissed me, and my mother remarked, that she was scorched a good deal, and her beautiful hair

much burned; but he left us speedily, and returned to see what could be done to save the more valuable property in the house. I have been told since, that his mind was evidently agitated and confused, and his orders contradictory; and that much more might have been saved if he had displayed more presence of mind. Corporeally he was undoubtedly a very brave man, and had shewn himself such; but he was not a man of ready action or strong determination. However, almost all the plate was saved, and some of the pictures which were fine; but several boxes of papers, of much importance, I am told, could not be found in the confusion of the moment, and were undoubtedly lost.

“Memory breaks off about that time, and I only remember that the whole house was burned, and the greater part of the walls fell in, with the exception of those of the ivy tower, which were very ancient, and much thicker than the rest. Even there the woodwork was all con-

sumed, and the stairs fell, except where a few of the stone steps, about half way up, still clung to the masonry.

“ My father often talked of rebuilding the house ; but I believe his finances had been previously embarrassed ; and he had suffered a heavy loss. We went then to live at Buckley Hall, which had fallen to my mother from her uncle, some two years before, and which was not above twenty miles distant from the old house. It was a more modern building, with fine gardens, in stiff figures, of all shapes, with urns and fountains and many quaint devices ; but it had no deer park, and I sadly missed the fern and the hawthorne and the wild broomy dells.

“ My next remembrance is of being ill and confined to my bed ; and my mother singing to me, as I began to grow a little better ; and I recollect very well her coming into my room one day, looking very anxious, and my asking her to sing, with all the thankless impatience of youth. Well, she sang, but the tears rolled

down her cheeks, and when I was suffered to go out of my chamber again, I could find my little sister no where, I never saw her again, and she must have died of the same malady from which I had suffered. My mother's health waned from that hour, slowly, so slowly as to be hardly seen to change between day and day, but none the less certainly. Gentle and sweet, patient and uncomplaining, she would not burden any one, even with a knowledge of what she felt. My father was all kindness to her, and to me, but he was sometimes too light and thoughtless, I believe—vowed that society would cheer her, and filled his house with company, not always the most considerate or the most quiet. There was upon me, young as I was, an impression that my mother was not well, that she loved tranquillity, that noise disturbed her, and I did my best to keep still, and even silent when I was near her. I would sit by her for hours reading, for when we came over to Buckley, we found a good teacher there

and I had rapidly learned to read. Then, when I could bear inactivity no longer, I would go out and get my pony, saddle him myself, and ride wild over the country; or wander about the gardens, and think. I learned a good deal about this time, for my father was very expert in all manly exercises, and took a pleasure in teaching me; and the good parson of the parish, a very learned, but singular man, took great care of my studies.

“ At length, when I was about ten years old, the terrible moment came when I was to lose a mother. I will not dwell upon that sad time, but my heart seemed closed—shut up, I cared for nothing, loved nothing, took no interest in anything, and yet I was cast more than ever upon my own thoughts, for the good old parson whose instructions might have afforded me some diversion for the mind, removed suddenly to a much better living, some fifteen miles distant. My father still gave me instruction in fencing, wrestling, the use of the broad

sword, &c. ; but he gave them, and I received them, languidly. At length, one day he said to me, 'Edward, you are very sad, my boy, and it is time you should resume your studies. I shall be very lonely without you, but I think it will be better for you to go over to good Doctor Winthorne's, whom you love so well, and who, I am sure, will receive you as a pupil. We shall only be fifteen miles apart, and I can see you often.'

"I made no objection, for Buckley had grown odious to me—every thing there revived regrets, and in about a week I was quietly installed in the neat and roomy parsonage, the glebe and garden of which was bounded by the same stream which ran past the old house in which I was born. It had been there a brawling stream, but here, some ten miles further down upon its winding course, it had become a slow, and somewhat wide river.

"I wish I had time to tell you how I learned, and what I learned, under the good clergy-

man's instructions. He had his own notions, and very peculiar notions, in every thing. Latin and Greek he taught me, but he taught me French and Italian too, and taught them all at once. His lessons were very short, for it was his maxim never to weary attention; but he took especial care that my bodily faculties should not lose anything for want of exercise. He would say that he had known many clever hunchbacks, and very learned and ingenious lame men; but that each of them had some peculiarity of judgment, which shewed that a straight intellect seldom inhabited a crooked body, or a strong mind a feeble one. He would make me wrestle and play at quoits and cudgels with ploughboys; shoot with the gamekeepers of neighbouring estates; ride my pony over a rough country and dangerous leaps, and himself lead the way. He was a devout man, notwithstanding, and was highly esteemed by his parishioners and by a small circle of noble gentlemen, to some of whom

he was allied, and who were not unfrequent guests at the parsonage. All this went on for about nine months; a considerable part of which time my father was absent from Buckley, travelling, as they said, for his health, in Italy, where he had passed some years when quite a young man. At length, when he returned, I went home to pass some time with him, but I found him not alone."

"Had he married again so early?" asked Clement Tournon, with a look of consternation.

"Oh no! replied Master Ned, he never married again; but there was a young gentleman with him, some twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, tall, handsome, but with a dark and heavy brow, which almost spoiled his beauty. He spoke English with a strong foreign accent, and had altogether the appearance of a foreigner. I naturally presumed he was a guest, and treated him as such; but it was evident that he was an exceedingly favored guest, and all the servants seemed to pay him the

most profound attention. I know not why, but I speedily began to dislike him—perhaps it was a certain sort of patronising air he assumed towards me—not exactly that of an elder to a younger person; but that of a superior to an inferior. My father's conduct, too, was very strange; he did not introduce the visitor to me by name, but presented me to him, saying, 'My son Edward,' and during the rest of the day called him simply, Richard. On the following morning I detected, or fancied I detected the servants looking at me, watching me, with an appearance of interest that almost amounted to compassion. They were all very fond of me, and each seemed to regard Master Ned—the only name I went by—as his own child; but when they now gazed upon me, there was an air of vexation, almost of pity, on their faces; and once or twice I thought the old steward was about to tell me something of importance in private; but he broke off and turned his conversation to common subjects.

" All this, however, was so disagreeable to me, that after having staid two days at Buckley, I returned to my old preceptor's house, at Applethorpe, feeling more wretched than I had felt since the first sad shock of my mother's death. The same night, after supper, Dr. Winthorne questioned me closely as to my visit, and asked what had caused me to return so soon. Whether he saw anything in my manner, or had heard of anything from others I did not know ; but I told him all, frankly, and he fell into a fit of thought, which lasted till bed time. On the following morning my studies, my exercises, and my amusements were renewed, with increased activity. There was something more I wished to forget, as well as the irreparable loss of my mother, and I left not one moment unemployed.

" It was now the month of May, and the season had been both cold and rainy ; but I never suffered either cold or rain, either snow or sleet, to keep me within doors ; and no

naked Indian could be more hardy than I was. At length some warm skies, with flying clouds and showers, came to cheer us ; and, with my rod in my hand, I sallied forth one morning early, to lure the speckled tyrants of the stream out of the water. I walked on with good success for about two miles, and arrived at a shadowy reach of the river where it went into some deep pools, and then, tumbling over a shelf of rock, in a miniature cascade, rushed on deep and strong towards the east. I have said I was early ; there was some one there before me. A powerful-looking man, of some four or five-and-twenty years of age, was wading the stream, with a rod in his hand, and a pair of funnel-shaped boots upon his legs. Where he stood the water did not come much above his knees ; but I knew that a little further on it deepened, and the bed of the stream was full of holes, in which the finest trout usually lay ; but the stranger seemed a skilful angler, and I doubted not knew the river

as well as I did. Not to disturb his sport, I sat quietly down on the bank and watched him. He was not very prepossessing in appearance, for his features were large and coarse, and though there was a certain sort of dignity about his carriage, yet his form was more that of a man accustomed to robust labour, than to the more graceful sports of gentlemen. However, as I was gazing, he hooked a large fish, apparently somewhat too stout for his tackle, and to prevent the trout from getting among the roots and stones, while he played him, the fisherman kept stepping backwards, with his face towards me, and his back towards the deep run and the pool. 'Take care, take care!' I cried, but my warning came too late, his feet were already on the ridge of rock, and the next instant he fell over into the deepest part of the water. He rose instantly, but whether he was seized with cramp, or that his large heavy boots filled with water I know not, but he sunk again at once with a loud cry, and I ran along the

ridge of stone, to give him help. The stream was much swollen with the late rains, and even there it was running very strong, so that I could hardly keep my footing; but I contrived to get to a spot near which he was just rising again, and held out the thickest end of my rod to him. It was barely within his reach, but he grasped it with one hand so sharply, as almost to pull me over into the pool with him. I got my feet between two large masses of stone, however, and pulled hard drawing him towards me, till he could get hold of the rock, with his hands. His safety was then easily ensured, and I only remarked two things peculiar in his demeanour: one was, that he never thanked me, and the other, that in all the struggle he had contrived to retain his fishing rod.

“ ‘ Can you not swim ? ’ he asked as soon as we had both reached the bank. I answered in the negative, and he added, ‘ learn to swim, please God, it may save your life some day, learn to swim, ’ I offered to take him up to the

parsonage, that he might dry his clothes; but he refused, not very civilly, and then he asked my name, looking me very steadily in the face, without the slightest expression of gratitude for the aid I had rendered him, and no trace of either agitation or trouble, from the danger he had run. 'You have kept your rod,' I said, 'but you have broken your line.'

" 'I never let go my hold,' he answered, 'but, as you say, I have broken my line and lost my fish. Are you Sir Richard Langdale's son—the man up at Buckley,' I answered that I was; and in a few minutes after we parted. I did not forget his advice, for a part of every day during that summer, I passed in the water learning and practising the art of swimming, till none could swim better or longer. I have never seen that man since, but he had fully repaid my assistance, by inducing me to learn that, which has more than once been of great service to me.

" It was the month of October, before I again

visited Buckley, and then my father sent for me. I found the same young man still there, whom I had seen on my former visit ; but now my father removed all doubt of who he was, by saying, ' Edward, it is time that you should know this is your brother Richard—your elder brother,' I need not dwell upon the mortification and annoyance which this announcement caused me. I was very young, as you may know when I tell you, that this occurred about five years ago, and though of a somewhat sensitive character, I might have thought little of the matter, after the first shock, had my brother's manner pleased me, had he shewn kindness or affection for me. But with a sort of presentiment of what he was to become, I disliked him from the first, and he repaid me well, treating me with a sort of supercilious coldness I could not bear. On the morning of the fourth day, when he had gone out fowling, with a number of servants and dogs, I went into my father's chamber, and announced

to him my intention of going back that morning, to pursue my studies with good Doctor Winthorne. Perhaps my tone was somewhat too decided and imperative for one so young, towards his father, but it certainly was respectful, and my father did not oppose my purpose. He merely spoke, almost in an apologetic manner, of my brother and myself, intimated that he saw my annoyance, and attributing it to motives which had never crossed my mind, added, 'You will have fortune enough, Ned. You surely need not grudge your brother his share,' I did not reply, but his words set me musing; and an hour after I left Buckley, and returned to Applethorpe. There, as before, I told my worthy preceptor all that had occurred, and he somewhat censured my conduct, but, at the same time, condoled with, and comforted me.

" 'This young man,' he said, 'must be the son of an Italian lady, whom, according to a vague rumour current about the time your

father married your mother, he had previously wedded, in her own country. It was said, her relations had separated her from him, on account of his religion, and had shut her up in a convent, where she had died of grief. What he said about your fortune being sufficient, alluded, of course, to the Buckley estate, which, being derived from your mother, must descend to you.'

" ' I never thought of fortune,' I answered, ' and should be glad to have a brother whom I could love ; but I cannot like this young man.'

" I had now seen my father, for the last time in life. A quarrel, it would seem, took place, between him and one of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and about six months after the period of my visit, they met and fought. Both were good swordsmen, and my father killed his adversary on the spot. He was much wounded in the encounter, however, and died some four-and-twenty hours after. Sir Richard, his son, had not thought fit to send for me, but as soon

as the news reached Applethorpe, Dr. Winthorne went over with me to Buckley. There a scene took place, which I shall never think of without pain. My brother's whole thoughts were of the rich succession which had fallen to him. He had four or five lawyers with him—some from the country, others brought post haste from London. He claimed the whole estates—Buckley, and all that it contained; and his lawyer showed that that estate having fallen to my mother after her marriage, without any deed of settlement having reserved it to herself and her heirs, it had passed, in pure possession, to my father, and descended to his eldest son. There was some dispute between him and Dr. Winthorne, who, with the village attorney, advocated my cause warmly; but in the end, the good clergyman took my arm, saying, 'Come away, Edward. There are too many bad feelings here already. There will be more if we stay. Your brother, who strips you of your mother's fortune, because she perhaps

trusted too far his father and yours, cannot deprive you of Malden farm, which was left you by name by your great uncle. Indeed, I will not believe that your father did not intend to do you justice. His last words to you implied it, and probably, Mr. Sykes, Sir Richard did make a will, which we must leave you to have produced, if there be one.' These last words were addressed to my firm friend, the village lawyer, who, though aged, and a good deal deformed, wanted no energy. He had always loved my mother, and, whenever I could, I had sent him game and fish; I always see him when I am in England, but no will was ever found, proof of my father's marriage to the Signora Laura Scotti were produced, and also of her death, some five years before the marriage of my mother; and my brother Richard remained possessed of all that had once seemed destined for me. He found the property greatly encumbered, it is true, but he paid no debts that he could by any means evade, and being naturally of a profuse

and luxurious disposition, soon found it necessary to sell much plate and jewels, many of which, beyond doubt, were my mother's own. Amongst the rest must have gone the cup I saw last night. As for myself, the little farm of Malden was all that was left me, the annual income of which is not quite two hundred pounds a-year—enough perhaps for any right ambition; but I had been educated in high expectations, and I had received a shock which changed or seemed to change my whole nature.

“ One night, when we had been talking of these things, Dr. Winthorne laid his hand upon my shoulder, saying, ‘ Ned, you must make yourself a name and an estate. There are two courses before you. Either pursue your studies vigorously for a few years and then go to the University, and push your fortunes in the church or at the bar, or put yourself in the way of another sort of advancement, and mingle in the strife of courts and camps. You have talents for the one, if you choose to

embrace it. Your animal qualities may fit you for the other. If the latter be your choice, amongst my noble kinsfolk I can put you on the entrance of the road ; but you are not a boy who can remain idle. Think it over till to-morrow at this hour, and then tell me of your resolve.'

" My determination was soon made. I could not make up my mind, especially with the feelings that were then busy in me, to devote myself to mere dry and thoughtful studies, and I chose the more active scenes. The very next night Dr. Winthorne wrote to the Lord Montague—distantly related to his mother—and in about two months after I received the appointment of gentleman page in his household, the only path now in England to honor and renown. In this career I have met with many vicissitudes, and have learned much, in a harsher and sterner school than that of good Dr. Winthorne. I have not suffered in mind or in body, and if my character has been hardened, I do believe the change

took place, not in the four last years of action and endeavour, but in the few months of suffering and endurance which immediately preceded and followed my father's death. Let it not be thought, my excellent friend, that in anything I have said, I wished to cast a reproach upon his memory. I am sure that he intended to secure to me what by right and equity was mine, whatever mere law may say ; but probably the duel in which he fell was hasty, and it was a habit of his mind to put off both consideration and action as long as he could. Thought was a labour that troubled him, and he often would not see dangers, because reflection upon the best way of meeting them would have been painful. As to my brother, I have never seen him again. I hear he has returned to Italy, there to spend what remains to him of his wealth. Thus, you see, that though that cup is mine by right, it is no more mine by law than the estate of Buckley, which has gone from me for ever."

The old merchant mused, and Lucette ex-

claimed, eagerly, that Sir Richard Langdale's conduct was cruel and unjust ; but Master Ned answered, very mildly, more so, indeed, than he might have done had not sickness softened him,—“ There is much that is both cruel and unjust in the law ; but when I think of the contrast between my home before and after he appeared in it, and when I think of what my own heart was before and after he put his icy hand upon it—how he took from it its gentleness, and its kindness, and its confidence, I cannot but think he has been cruel ; and though the same blood may and does flow in our veins, his is mingled with another stream which is no way akin to mine.”

“ You must take that cup, Master Edward,” said the Syndic, “ I cannot keep it, in conscience. Every time I saw it in the cupboard—— ” but his sentence was broken in upon, and all discussion stopped, by the entrance of Marthon, introducing a stout man, in plain travelling attire, who was a stranger, at least to Edward Langdale.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE old Syndic did not seem to know much more of his visitor than Edward Langdale, but he called him, Master Jean Baptiste, and asked him, what news from Niort?

"Nothing very good, Monsieur," answered the stranger, "half a league more of the papist lines is finished, and it is hard to get through. It was all done so quick and so quietly, no one knew any thing of it, till the day before yester-

day, when some troops and a large supply of flour, was sent down to Ferriac."

"And where is the King himself?" demanded Clement Tournon somewhat anxiously.

"He is still at Nantes," replied the visitor, "but I want some talk with you, Master Syndic, when I can have it alone, and it must be to-night too, for I have to go on by to-morrow at day-break, if I can get a boat."

The old man raised a candlestick from the table, and led the stranger into another room, while Lucette and Edward remained together.

Now the most natural thing in the world, for a young lad between sixteen and seventeen, and a young girl a year or two younger, when so thrown upon their own resources, would have been to make love, or at least to fall into it; and there was also a strong incentive in the gratitude Edward felt for all Lucette's kind nursing, and all the interest which Lucette had taken in his illness and recovery. But the truth must be told. They did not make love

in any of the many ways in which that article is prepared, in any of the kingdoms of the earth. Moreover they did not fall in love in the least—I am sorry for it, for of all the sweet and charming things which this world produces, that which is scornfully called calves' love, is the sweetest and most charming. If it has really anything to do with a calf at all, it is the sweetbread. Oh, that early love, that early love! How pure, and tender, and soft, and timid, and bright, and fragrant it is! It is the opening of the rosebud of life, which may in after times display warmer colours, give forth more intense odour, but loses in delicacy and grace with every petal that unfolds. But as I have said, the truth must be told. They neither talked of love nor thought of love, although Lucette was very beautiful, and believed Edward Langdale to be very handsome. She merely made him describe to her the scenes in which his youth had been spent. She talked to him of his mother too, and he told

her how sweetly that mother had sung, and said to her that Lady Langdale's voice was very like her own; and then he besought her to sing to him again, and she sang to please him, and they fell into thought, and spoke of a thousand things more, in which the reader would take no manner of interest, but which interested them so much, that when Clement Tournon returned, they fancied he had been gone but a few minutes; and he had been absent an hour and a-half!

His visitor did not return with him, for he had taken some supper and retired to rest; but the good old Syndic's brow was gloomy, and the news he had received, whatever it was, did not seem to have been very favourable.

"To bed, to bed, Lucette," said the old man, "we must not keep Master Ned up late o'nights. He will soon have to go travelling again; and he must gather strength.

Lucette did not receive the intelligence, that Ned must soon depart, very sadly, though

she would have very well liked him to stay. She laughed, and kissed the old man and ran away ; but the Syndic silently took hold of the youth's sleeve, and prevented him from retiring till the bright girl was gone. " Stay a minute," he said, at length, " I have something to speak to you about. How do you feel your strength and health to-night ?"

" Oh, much improved," replied Master Ned, " I shall be as strong as ever in a couple of days."

" That is well, that is well !" said Clement Tournon, " and whither do you turn your steps when you leave Rochelle ?"

" I have to traverse the whole of France, and even approach close to Paris," answered Master Ned, " for the end of my journey as far as I yet know, is to be at Dammezin. First, however, I must go to Mauzé, where I hear the Duc de Rohan and Monsieur de Soubise are to be found, I have letters for each."

The reply seemed to puzzle the old man a

little; for he shook his head, saying, "It will not do—"

"Have they left Mauzé?" asked Edward, "this illness has been very unfortunate."

"If you do not find them there, you will hear of them," answered the Syndic, "what I mean is, you cannot get straight to Mauzé? Things have changed since you arrived, my son. The papist troops are between us and Mauzé, and you will have to make a long deviation from your way, and come upon the castle from the north."

"So be it," said Master Ned, "If we can but have a fair wind we can get to Marans, and running up the Sevres, reach Mauzé from the north. It is not much longer, if I recollect right. I would embark to-morrow morning, but I have still some preparations to make."

"You seem to know the country well, my son," said the old man, "and your scheme is a good one; but what preparations can you have to make—not indeed that I would have

you go too soon, lest your health should suffer; but I should think as soon as you feel strong enough you will be all ready."

"Not quite, Monsieur Tournon," answered the lad, "I must follow my orders, and those I have are very reasonable commands. I have, as I just said, to cross three quarters of France, which I could not do, as an Englishman, since these last troubles, without a safe conduct. One has been procured for me, however, from young Sir Peter Apsley, who obtained it in order to go to Geneva to study. He has changed his mind since, and I am to represent him; but as there are mentioned in the paper, a page and two servants, I must engage such followers of the most trusty character I can find. I have already got Pierrot la Grange, who is an adept at masquerading, and I did think of bribing Jargeau to accompany me; but I had some suspicions of him, before I landed, and I soon found that he is treacherous. I must therefore look for a man and a boy here,

to-morrow, and you must help me, my good father, for it is of much consequence they should be trusty."

"They will soon be found," answered the Syndic, "but I fear me you will be soon discovered, my son. This Cardinal has eyes in every quarter, and almost, I might say, in every house. As to the page, I may have to think a little," he added musingly. "Did pages wear long tunics, as in my young days, Lucette might do; but I doubt whether she would put on boys' clothes, as they are worn now."

"Lucette!" exclaimed Edward Langdale, in a tone of unfeigned astonishment. "That would never do. She could not ride half through France at the pace I should have to go; and besides—but tell me, in the name of Heaven, could you part with her so easily, and on such a journey?"

The old Syndic smiled faintly, saying, "I could and must part with her whenever it is for her good, my son; but I did not propose

she should go with you further than Mauzé, where you would have to find another page. There she must go before Saturday, as I will explain. Listen, for it is fit you should know all that is going on here, that you may tell it to those whom you are about to see. I will make it all clear to you, and then I will go and consult my pillow till to-morrow morning. The King and the Cardinal are determined to crush out Rochelle. We have stood a siege here before, and perhaps may do so now, though I do not think it, for Richelieu is not following the rash measures of those who went before him. He has been hovering over this devoted city like an eagle over a hare half hidden in the brushwood, and now he is ready to stoop. They say that he and King Louis have been stayed at Nantes by some troubles in the court; but nothing is neglected: day by day the troops are gathering round, and we are now well nigh hemmed in by land. The sea is still open to us; but I have learned, from

a sure hand, this night, that the Cardinal has gathered together a navy of small armed vessels in all the neighbouring ports—Rochefort, Marennes, Rozan, Bourgneuf, Painbœuf, and others. They will soon be off our harbour—on Monday next, they say, and though, thank Heaven, we have ships, and good ones, yet, in point of numbers, we are nothing. The foolish men of what they call the French party, refused, as you know, to give entrance to the Earl of Denbigh's fleet, which would have kept the sea open to us, and insured us against blockade for ever. But as things now stand, I cannot expose a girl like Lucette to the horrors of a siege, with probably no escape. Indeed every useless mouth we can remove from Rochelle the better for us; and besides, those who have a right have required me to send her out of the city without loss of time."

"Had you not better go with her yourself?" asked Master Ned.

"I will not run away from my post," answered

the Syndic. I could have once struck a good blow in defence of my native city ; and, though that is past, I can still aid her with counsel. Besides, where could I go ? No where but to England. I may send what gold I have got to that country, if I can find means ; but my fate is with Rochelle, and Lucette's must lie far away. God help us ! we are at a dangerous pass, my son, and the hunter's toils are tighter round us than some of the senseless citizens will believe. As to Jargeau, you cannot trust him. Of Pierrot I have doubts—not of his honesty, for he is truthful and steady when he is sober—nor of his ability, for he is a thing we often see in this strange world, a *clever fool*—shrewd enough in every thing that imports but little, but weak as water in matters in which his own fortunes and his soul's salvation rest. I doubt his power to abstain from a vice which has ruled him for ten long years. True, he has been sober ever since he has been here, and he promises steadily ; but, alas, my son,

I have seen so many a drunkard fall away from all good resolutions with the first moment of a strong temptation, that I wish you had a better follower."

"I will keep him sober," answered Master Ned, boldly; "he knows I am not to be trifled with. I think he has every inclination to reform, but only wants strength of mind. I will give him the strength. Many a man is feeble in some point till he has support, just as a pea trails upon the ground till we plant a strong pole by it. I will be his pea stick, Monsieur Tournon. But as to another man and the page. If Mademoiselle Lucette only goes to Mauzé, and you will trust her with me, I will see her safe there, if I get there myself, upon my honor; and see not why she should have to change her dress, for the distance is so small from Marans that——"

"You may be stopped and have to shew your safe conduct," answered the Syndic. "You know not how rapidly this Cardinal is

drawing the net round us; but surely we can equip her so that she shall remain concealed, and yet not shock her modesty."

"Oh yes," replied Master Ned, "'tis still the mode with us to wear a loose, long-hanging coat over the *just au corps*, in cool weather, and this is cool enough. I have one in my bags; and they are so freely fitted, that it matters not whether it be somewhat large or not. But what I fear is her long, beautiful amber hair. No boy's head ever bore such a profusion, though it is the custom now to wear it very long behind."

"We must have it cut," said the Syndic, with as little reverence for love-locks as any puritanical preacher of the coming epoch. "A woman may well yield her hair to save her liberty and her religion—nay perhaps her life. But we will talk more to-morrow, my son, and we had both better seek rest now, and rise by dawn to-morrow."

The results of this conversation may be easily

divined by the reader, whose business it is in a novel, as well as in a tragedy, to supply from his own wit or imagination, all the little facts and circumstances, which it may please an author to omit. Yes, dear Reader, always recollect that you have your responsibilities as well as your privileges, your duties as well as your powers, and then, if you and I do not understand each other, it is not your fault.

The following evening, about seven o'clock, there assembled in the saloon, the Syndic, Edward Langdale, a strong, supple-looking man, of whom more hereafter, Pierrot la Grange, and a beautiful boy, apparently some two or three years younger, and much shorter than Master Ned. The latter entered the list in one of the broad-brimmed hats of the day, a handsome doublet, and a loose black velvet coat, with hanging sleeves. It descended nearly to the knees, and almost met a pair of large riding boots, which, together with the hat and feather, and a small gold-hilted dagger on

the left hip, gave the wearer a sort of cavalier look which accorded well with the character assumed—yes, assumed, for a warm mantling blush that spread over Lucette's fair face, and the shy impulse with which she threw herself into the old man's arms, would have betrayed her sex to any one who was not in the secret. Every thing, however, was now hurry, for a good sized fishing-boat had been engaged for a somewhat earlier hour, and with a few words of admonition to Lucette from the Syndic, and some directions to the men, the whole party set out for the port. Marthon gave them egress, kissing Lucette tenderly as she passed the door, and in ten minutes Clement Tournon held the young girl in his arms by the side of the boat, taking one last embrace. He wept not, it is true, but he heaved a heavy sigh. Edward Langdale lifted her into the little barque, and as the boat pushed off he felt that tears had fallen upon his bosom.

CHAPTER IX.

Although there can be few things more pleasant to many of the senses with which our dull clay is vivified, than to sail over a shining sea, under a moonlight sky ; although that feeling of repose which emanates from rapid, easy motion, is then most sweetly tasted ; yet, when we are in haste, we could always wish the breeze to be favourable and full. We could bear a little more rocking of our sea-cradle, did we but know that our progress was all the faster.

In this respect, at least, Edward Langdale was not to be gratified that night. The wind, it is true, was not exactly adverse, but it was not quite favourable, and moreover it was light. The boat did not make three miles an hour through the water, and was obliged to take a good stretch to the westward, in order to avoid sands and shoals.

In the meantime, the party in the boat was arranged very properly. Lucette sat near the stern, and Master Ned next to her, with Pierrot on his left, while on the other side were the newly-engaged servant and two sailors. But Lucette was silent; and Edward Langdale thought it better for a time to leave her so, as tears—springing from what scources it is not worth while to enquire—were still flowing, and the youth heard every now and then a gentle sob. For his part he talked a little to Pierrot, who told him that he had twice seen the good man Jargeau that day, had honestly notified him of his direlection of his service, and had

returned him his two horses, as he, Pierrot, had been ordered. Jargeau, he said, had been somewhat supercilious, somewhat triumphant; had shown that he knew all about Master Ned's encounter in Rochelle, and its consequences; observed that it would have been better for the youth if he had followed good counsel, and had laughed heartily at Pierrot's own resolutions of temperance, which he tried hard to make him break.

"I saw he had a great contempt for me, Master Ned," said the man, "but I showed him I could resist."

"He will laugh at you ten times more if ever you break your resolution," answered Edward Langdale, "and then he will laugh with some reason. Of course you gave him no reason to suppose we were going to-night?"

The man replied in the negative, and Edward, judging not amiss of the precise moment when comfort is most available, applied himself to sooth his beautiful young

companion. It is a very delicate, and even dangerous task for a young man of any thing short of sixty, and it would be vain to say Edward Langdale did not perform the office of consoler warmly. The nature of the case inspired tenderness; the gentleness and care with which she had nursed him required it, and their very youth justified it. He called her "dear Lucette," several times, and he tried hard to prompt hope of a speedy return to Rochelle, and a re-union with her excellent father.

At the latter word, Lucette gave a little start, "you mistake, Edward," she said, "he is not my father, though indeed he has been a father and more than a father to me. But you are protecting an orphan, my friend, I have neither father nor mother, living."

"Then is he your Grandfather?" asked the youth, "I thought he was very old to have a daughter of your age."

"He is no relation whatever," she answered

gravely, " but is as dear to me as any parent could have been. It is a long story which I may some time or another have an opportunity of telling you ; but enough for the present, that he has had the care of my education in Rochelle for the last four years, and has ever shown to me the affection of a father, and won from me the love and reverence of a child. I weep to part with him, but I weep from many other causes. Rochelle has been to me like the nest to a young bird, and now I am going forth into a world where I am almost a stranger, to a fate that I know not, but which can hardly be a peaceful one. Let us not talk, for it is better not even to think of it. What will come, must come, and I must bear all with patience."

" Well then, let us look at that beautiful sea," said Edward Langdale, " is it not like an ocean of melted silver ? Look there ! Here comes a great wave, curling over in the moonlight—now we rise above it, and it is past. So it is, Lucette, with the misfortunes of this

world. They seem ready to overwhelm us, but, with good steering, and a strong mind, we rise above them and leave them behind us !”

“ But who shall teach me to steer my boat ?” asked Lucette, sadly.

Had it been a few years later in his life, Edward would probably have said, “ Let me ;” but he did not say it, and he was wise. He applied himself, however, with more earnestness than ever to sooth his sweet companion, and to wean her thoughts from subjects of pain or anxiety ; nor did he do so without success. His mind was stored with the riches of much and various study, and he found, too, that her young hours had not been employed in vain. She could talk with him of things which few of her age and her country could converse upon, and, to his delight, he found that she spoke English as well as he did himself, with hardly any accent, and with perfect facility. Thenceforward their conversation was carried on in his mother tongue, and his mind easily

saw the many advantages which might arise should any impediment present itself on their journey, from their perfect acquaintance with two languages.

It was all very perilous for the two young people, and really, could it have been avoided, they should not have been placed in such a situation; but there are times and circumstances when proprieties must be forgotten and folks must take their chance, or die. Now the period was rapidly approaching when not a mouse could get out of Rochelle, and old Clement Tournon foresaw it coming. To take advantage of Edward's journey was all that was left for him, and that was almost too late. Besides decorum came in with George the first, and little of it was known in the world at large before the time of William the taciturn. Nevertheless was it not dangerous to set two young souls full of early life, and all its passions and imaginations just budding, to sail over "the moon-lit sea" together, talking a language

unknown to their companions, with mystery, and misfortune, and interest on one side, and gratitude, compassion, and curiosity on the other. They did not, it is true, get out of that boat with the same feelings they carried into it; but then all these matters are progressive except in Italy, and some parts of Spain, and two or three other countries I could name—countries where people jump into love with their eyes open, or fall into it with their eyes shut. In England we slide into it. But as I was remarking, all such things—with the exception already specified—are progressive, and there were several little accidents which helped the matter on. Lucette was cold, and Edward fastened the agraffes of the loose coat over her fair bosom, and then he wrapped a cloak round her; and then the wind shifted, and the sea began to run very high, and he had to put his arm round her to keep her steady on the seat. Then, what between fear and headache, she leaned her brow upon his shoulder,

and he had to comfort and reassure her the best way he could. There is something in animal magnetism, dear reader, depend upon it, although I think it acts in a different way from that generally attributed to it.

But to pause no more upon such discussions, which are always very fruitless, I must say their situation soon became very unpleasant and even critical. The wind and the currents carried the boat far to the westward of Marans, and the boat shipped many a heavy sea. She was good and staunch, however, and the sailors were fearless, hardy and experienced ; but all that comforted poor Lucette very little, so that all her consolation was to cling through long hours to Edward Langdale, and to ask him, from time to time, if there was any danger. At length, however—just when having run a good way to the north-west, they had contrived to tack, and lay their course, with a better wind, towards Marans—the sun began to rise, and Edward whispered, “ Now we shall soon be

there, dear Lucette." But he was mistaken. Expectation is always mistaken. There really seems a perversity about those ladies with the distaff and scissars which leads them to spin the thread of our life with knots and tangles, to cut it short at the very moment of fruition, and especially, when they see any one foolish enough to calculate upon any success, to ravel the whole skein into inextricable confusion. The boat could only approach the shore by continual tacking, and I would tell all the tacks she made, and how long each took, but, unhappily, I know nothing of nautical matters, except that a ship has a head and a stern, as most other things have, that a fair wind carries people rapidly to port, and a foul wind delays them often a long time. The sun had passed the meridian at least three hours when the boat at last reached the mouth of the Sèvres Niortaise, which would at that time float small vessels very comfortably. I know not what it will do now, for the sands upon

the west coast of France have so encroached upon the domains of old ocean that Hennebon was once within a short distance of the sea, and is now actually an inland town, only to be reached by a post road or a good long sail up the river Blavet. As good fortune would have it, however, and thanks to the paternal care of good Clement Tournon, there were plenty of provisions on board the boat, and the Sevres Niortoise received them less hungry than might otherwise have been the case. The ascent of the river, as far as the spot where it was proposed to stop, occupied two hours more; but all was calm now, and the change from danger to security is a great promoter of rash hope. The color came back into Lucette's face, and she and Edward Langdale talked gaily of the coming hours. At length they ran up to a little landing where a house or two, all occupied by protestants, lined the shore, headed by a good-looking cabaret, with white walls and a brush upon the top of a pole. The

Rochellois boatmen were well known to the host, and his welcome was joyful ; but when, after seeing Lucette comfortably lodged in a room by herself—although the landlord seemed to think that too much care was taken of a boy who ought to take care of himself—Master Ned proceeded to enquire into the facilities for reaching Mauzé, he found more serious impediments than he had expected. No horses were to be bought nearer than Marans, some three miles distant, and between the river and the chateau of Mauzé the host reported several large bodies of Catholic soldiers and workmen, whose conduct, according to his account, was not over scrupulous. Horses, however, had to be procured at all events ; for to reach the chateau, if possible, Edward Langdale was bound, and accordingly, with some hesitation, he despatched Pierrot la Grange to Marans, with a strong injunction to temperance. Pierrot's virtue was probably not very severely tried ; for the wine—the only wine to be pro-

cured in that part of the country—was execrable: and brandy, at that time, notwithstanding the proximity of Rochelle, found its way to Marans in very small quantities. At all events, towards ten o'clock at night he re-appeared at the cabaret with the four horses and their equipments, as his young master had required, and a boy leading the two last-bought, while he himself mounted on one, led another by the bridle. The landlord was conversing with the boatman at the door, while Edward was calmly sleeping on a bench in the kitchen; but the former seemed to have received some intimation that the page was not exactly what he appeared; for he requested Pierrot, in a whisper, to "tell his young lord that there was a minister in the hamlet, and that young people could be married there just as well as at Mauzé."

In about an hour, the whole party were mounted and on their road, Pierrot having assured his master that he could guide him to

Mauzé as well as any man born on the spot. Nor did he exaggerate his knowledge; but proceeded perfectly, steadily, and carefully, till at length the little bridle path they followed lost itself in the moors which cover that part of the country. The moon, however, was shining as brightly as it had done the night before, and there seemed no difficulty in finding the way; but the wide expanse before them looked solitary and cheerless, with its grey shadows and stunted bushes, and pieces of ferny swamp, while here and there rose a small clump of low, rugged pines, or a deep pit obstructed the advance of the travellers.

At the end of about two hours. Pierrot remarked, "we are not three miles from Mauzé, now sir, and we had better be a little careful, for if there be any folks we have to fear, they must be about here."

Hardly had he spoken when a line of lights came in sight, which Master Ned instantly understood to proceed from scattered watch

fires, and halting for a few minutes he held a short council with his followers, in which their future proceedings were determined. The lights extended some way to the right and left, and it was conjectured that the works which it was known the King's army were employed in constructing stopped at a certain point on one side or the other, leaving a passage round the extremity by which the little village, and its castle, could be reached. The question only was, which side was free, and Edward resolved to ride on in advance, with one of the men and reconnoitre, leaving Lucette and the other man at the first sheltered spot they could find. One of the deep pits which I have mentioned was soon met with, and along its edge on the opposite side from that which the little party approached was edged with a little fringe of low wood which concealed it well. A road which had been cut for the purpose of digging gravel—Heaven knows for what purpose the gravel itself was wanted, as gravel walks were few in that part of the country—

led right into the pit and along it. Edward and his party found their way in. He lifted Lucette from her horse, and being more considerate than most lads of his age, he paused to think which of the men he should leave with her. That was soon settled. The man he had hired in Rochelle, was well known to Clement Tournon. His name was Jacques Beaupré, by the way—and the good Syndic had guaranteed his honesty, adding that he was a courageous man and witty. Now Jacques had not uttered three words since he had been in Edward's service, and therefore of his wit he knew nothing; but his honesty and his courage were much more important on the present occasion. Pierrot, Master Ned knew could be trusted in all things but one, but there was much to be remembered. He himself might be taken, and once delivered from the restraint of his presence, Edward naturally concluded that the bottle might have too great temptations for his worthy follower, and Lucette left to the perilous guardianship of a

drunken man. Jacques Beaupré was therefore left with Lucette. The bags were taken off the horses and deposited in his care, with orders to make his way to Mauzé, should any misadventure occur to Edward, and to place them and Lucette under the care of the Prince de Soubise ; and a warning was given him to destroy, if possible, the bag which had a red cross marked upon it, in case he saw that he could not escape the Catholic army. It may be supposed that all these directions alarmed poor Lucette a good deal, but she did not give way to her fears, although she fully forgave Edward for making his parting embrace a little more warm than even the customs of that day justified.

We are too apt in this world to make no allowance for the customs of different times and phases of society. Some fall into this fault from ignorance of any state of society but their own—with a vague idea of something having been strange in the customs of the Greeks and Romans, and the people whom Mr. Hallam wrote

about. Some who have read the chronicles of other times forget the minute particulars in their attention to more important facts; but believe me, dear reader, the times and the country, the climate and the water, do make very great differences in the notions which obtain regarding customs, and even morals. Ay morals! Half the morals in the world are made by society, and all the customs. I remember a Turkish ambassador, being present at a dance, asking gravely, "What does all that palming come to?" Since then the Turks have very generally left off their petticoats, and have acquired a good many new notions; but they still object to the "palming," and think its tendencies not desirable—the Khoran notwithstanding. However, the age of which I am now writing, was a kissing age—an age of *embrassades*. Every body kissed every body—on certain occasions; but it was specified that in public, and before witnesses, the kisses were to be bestowed on the right and left cheek, and not upon the mouth—especially in the case of

young gentlemen and ladies. Now the dereliction of poor Edward Langdale was, that his lips did not altogether confine themselves to the cheek of Lucette. Where they went Heaven knows; but I do not. However, she forgave him; and I do not see why we should not do so too. I am sure I should have kissed her lips, if I had had the opportunity, for they were rich, and soft, and full; and her breath was as fragrant as new mown hay.

After that kiss, he jumped upon his horse again, and rode away, leaving all his precious things behind him—both those he had brought from England, and those he had found in Rochelle.

The title I have affixed to this book, compels me to adhere to the adventures of Master Ned, but as that night was one of critical influence upon his fate, I cannot finish its events at the fag end of a chapter, which already is somewhat too long for the reader's patience, and for the writer's too.

CHAPTER X.

Now Edward Langdale was a very acute and intelligent lad before he touched the shores of France on that journey. He had learned more of the world and mankind in the few years he had been page to Lord Montagu, than many another youth does in a dozen. His previous education had fitted him for such acquisition, and the circumstances in which he had afterwards been placed—circumstances which required the exercise of every faculty—had ac-

cuminated every faculty. But, strange to say, each sense seemed to acquire more acuteness after he left Lucette. He had no notion in the world how it was so. He thought of those valuable leathern bags of his, and of the letters which were in them, and of the chance there was of their falling into an enemy's hands. He believed that was all ; but still, as the reader has a right to be let into all secrets, a vague, indefinite, misty idea of danger to Lucette, mingled with all other considerations, and sharpened every faculty.

With Pierrot by his side, and taking advantage of every thing which could screen his approach, he advanced as close to the King's lines as he could, without being perceived. He then rode along, seeing groups of soldiers and sappers lying on the ground, by their watch-fires, without one man seemingly wakeful enough to have killed a rat had it invaded his quarters. The end of the line on the right was soon reached ; but now there were

evident signs of completed trenches and a more strict guard; and retreating a little, to get under cover of the trees, which had become both taller and closer in that quarter, he turned his course towards the left, where the lines tended towards the Sevres Niortoise. Still nothing stirred, and at length Edward, to his great satisfaction, perceived the spot where the rapidly-progressing works had been abandoned at the set of sun, and where shovels, and pickaxes, and hatchets were piled up, after the labours of the day. Beyond was a wide extent of moor and brushwood, and after having gazed for a minute or two, he determined to push his horse far enough round to make sure that the passage was free before he went back for Lucette. His course was through some marshy ground, broken by bushes. The last fire of the French lines was a full quarter of a mile's distance, and every moment Edward became more and more convinced that the way was quite open and the passage safe. Suddenly,

however, he checked his horse, making a sign to Pierrot to stop, and saying, "Hark!"

"Horse, on my life!" cried Pierrot.

"Coming up from the left," replied Master Ned, "down, down! and amongst the bushes. Let the beasts take their own course. It may mislead them." Each sprung to the ground in a moment; the horses cast loose with a sharp blow in the flank, scampered across the moor, and the youth and Pierrot kneeled down amongst the shrubs. But the manœuvre was in vain. The moon was still shining brightly; they had been marked, and the pursuers but too plainly perceived that the two horses which had scampered off were now without riders. There was a momentary search amongst the bushes, and then a hard hand was laid upon Master Ned's shoulder. It might have been a dangerous experiment at another moment; but there were so many soldiers round as to render resistance hopeless; and Master Ned rose quietly without uttering a word.

It was a somewhat lawless age, and in lawless ages some men's fingers have a strange affection for other men's pockets. The worthy trooper whose right hand still retained its grasp of Edward's shoulder, felt his left impelled by irresistible powers towards the spot where purses in those days were generally carried, but he suddenly felt his wrist grasped with a strength, which he had no idea lay in the slight looking limbs of his prisoner, who at the same time raised his voice aloud, shouting in the French tongue, "Officer! Officer!"

The trooper had either miscalculated his distance from his companions, or Master Ned's powers of endurance, for while he struggled to free his wrist from the clinging fingers which grasped it, half a dozen more soldiers came up, with a gentleman in a handsome buff coat or buffe laid with gold, who was evidently the leader of the band.

"How now, young man; how now!" cried

the officer, regarding him by the moonlight, "What, resisting the King's authority?"

"By no means, Seigneur," replied Edward, who still held the soldier fast by the wrist, "I am merely resisting plunder, which I know is not by the King's authority. This man's hand was in my pocket. His intention might be to take my purse—which I should care little about, as there is not much in it, and I can get more—but it might be to take my safe conduct, which I will not part with, but for proper examination, to any one."

"Ho, ho ! a safe conduct !" said the officer. "How dare you try to rob him, Guillaume Bluet ? Let him go, this instant."

"I can't," answered the man, with a good-humoured roar of laughter, "the young devil has got my wrist as tight as if every finger was a vice. My hand was not in his pocket ; for by St. Ann he did not let me get it fairly in. I was only going to search him."

"Let the man's hand go, young gentleman," said the officer. "You mention a safe conduct. Let me see it."

"It is here," said Edward Langdale, drawing forth a handsome gilt leathern case. "I beg you to promise it shall be returned to me when you have examined it."

"I shall if I find it all in proper form," replied the other, "but in the meantime you will have to go to the lines, for I cannot examine passes by moonlight. Some one see and catch the two horses. Have you found the other man? Ah, there he is—Catch the horses I say."

In the meantime he had opened the case and taken out the passport, which, when spread out in the pale light, shewed all the appearance of an ordinary safe conduct, and Edward, anxious to prevent any search for Lucette and her guard, observed, in a quiet tone, "You will remark that the paper covers more than myself and my servant; but hearing that there

was danger on the road to Niort, we left the others behind."

"Then tell me, sir," said the officer, gravely, "how came it, when you were furnished with such a safe conduct as this, you attempted to pass the lines without shewing it, and tried to hide yourself when you saw my party?"

"Oh, in Rochelle, they tell me very bloody tales of you gentlemen up here," replied Edward, laughing, "and I thought that at Niort I could shew it with less trouble."

"Then you come from Rochelle, do you?" said the officer, "probably you came over in Lord Denbigh's fleet."

"No," answered the young man, boldly, "I came over before, in a merchant vessel, but I was obliged to stay some days in Rochelle, to hire servants and to get well; for I was ill there."

"Indeed," said the officer, not in any tone of interest, but merely as one of those insignificant ejaculations which men employ to stop

a gap, when they have nothing else to say ; and he continued humming one of those Parisian airs which are now technically known as *Pont neufs*, till the horses were caught, which was not until after half an hour's ineffectual effort ; for they had some spirit and some skittishness. Indeed it might have been as well—under fear of the critics—to tell the reader that the part of the country which we are now treading is rather famous for the sale of horses, which, though not so good as the Limousin, are somewhat of the same race, very hardy, and sometimes very fleet.

At length the beasts were inveigled, by some of the many methods of deceit which men use to entrap bipeds or quadrupeds, and, mounted on that which he indicated as his own, Master Ned, between two soldiers, was led to the end of the trench, followed by Pierrot, as well guarded, who had the good sense to keep his tongue under a rigorous rein. The two were civilly inducted into a small wooden building,

constructed of unplanned boards, and with a sentinel at the door, left together, while the officer went to examine the safe conduct—at least so he said. In truth he went to shew it to a superior officer.

Edward Langdale, however, took the opportunity, in a hurried manner, of indoctrinating Pierrot in regard to what he was to say, and what not to say. He could have done it quite at leisure, it is true, for the officer was full two hours absent; but the time was occupied with various comments and discussions, which might, under most circumstances, have been of great use. Man almost always makes calculations in vain. He stands upon a small point, unable to see an inch before his nose, while Fate is working in the background, beyond his sight, weaving round him a web of fine thread, through which he cannot break, let him flutter as hard as he will.

At length the officer reappeared, with the passport in its case. He returned it to the

young gentleman with a polite bow, saying, "Sir, your safe conduct seems in good form, and signed by the Cardinal himself."

Then he paused for a moment, and Edward replied, "Then I suppose I am at liberty to proceed? Now you see, sir, how much better it would have been for me to ride on straight to Niort, where in half an hour I could have had a good supper and a bottle of wine——"

"Your pardon, sir," said the other, "we can give you the bottle of wine here, though all you can have for supper, I am afraid, will be some Sardines d'Olonne and bread. But as to proceeding, you will have to make a little turn out of your way and go to Nantes. You will have four soldiers out of my troop for protection—merely for protection."

"As a prisoner, in short," said Edward, gravely. "I had thought the Cardinal's name was more potent in France."

"It is very potent," replied the officer, with a smile, "but he knows his signature better than we do; and the truth is, although the seal

is certainly official, we had an intimation yesterday, about three o'clock, that a young English gentleman, with three attendants, would endeavour to pass the lines, and that it was necessary to stop him, as he was an agent of the enemy. You have but one attendant, but your pass says three, and you have yourself acknowledged that you have left two behind."

"This is the work of some private enemy," said Master Ned, gravely, for the situation was not at all pleasant. "The intimation, of course, came from Rochelle?"

The officer nodded.

"Then," continued the youth, "you put faith in your enemies rather than in the signature of your own Prime Minister."

"Jargeau," whispered Pierrot, but the officer cut discussion short, saying, "I act under orders, gentlemen; and can only say, further, that you do not exactly go as prisoners, and may regulate your marches as you please."

You can set out at once, if you please, or you can wait till daybreak,"

"At once," said Edward, rather sternly, "the end of my journey is Geneva or Savoy, and I am anxious to get out of a country as soon as possible where even a regular passport does not protect me from detention."

"But the wine and the Sardines d'Olonne," said Pierrot.

"They can be brought while the men are making ready," replied the officer; and with a polite bow he left them still under guard.

The wine and the Sardines d'Olonne were brought and rapidly consumed. Then horses' feet were heard before the door, and, mounting, Pierrot and Master Ned, with four soldiers accompanying them, rode away in the direction of Nantes. It is a long and dreary ride at all times, and to Edward it was particularly unpleasant, for he had to remember a fact which the reader has probably forgotten, namely, that people who took advantage, with-

out right, of other people's safe conducts, were in those days very frequently hanged. Now Master Ned had a mortal aversion to hemp. All depends upon the application of things. An old saw, well applied, is excellent—detestable when wrongly introduced. A Burgundy pitch plaster on the chest is a capital remedy for incipient bronchitis, but has quite a contrary effect when applied to the mouth or nose. It is all the same with hemp. Used as rigging to a ship it is all very well : in the abstract, it is a soft, though somewhat tenacious fibre, which would not much hurt a fly ; but when twisted into several strands, and used as a tight cravat, it is unpleasant, and often dangerous. In this light it was viewed by Edward Langdale ; but he had run a good many hairs-breadth risks since he had been Lord Montagu's page, and the idea of the hemp did not exclude from his mind the idea of Lucette. There are two " ideas " in the last sentence, which the verbal critics may call tautologous ;

but I will let them both stand, for it were well if there were so many in most people's noddles.

However, as it is a very dreary road from Mauzé towards Nantes, and as the reflections of poor Edward Langdale were drearier still, I will not pause upon the details, but merely say, that thought after thought followed each other through his head, sometimes of the danger which he himself ran—sometimes of the danger which surrounded Lucette, and sometimes of the chances of making his escape. This continued for some three hours, during which time the body was suffering scarcely less than the mind. Hardly recovered from severe illness, he had quitted Rochelle too early; he had since undergone the fatigues of a storm at sea, a long, anxious ride, a short imprisonment, and now a three hours' journey, with little food, and only an hour's sleep out of thirty-six, upon the banks of the Sevre Niortoise. As day began faintly to dawn, fatigue and drowsiness overpowered him, and twice he swung

to the side of his horse, as if he were about to fall. The soldier who rode by his side, and who was well aware that his superiors had considerable doubt as to whether they were right in sending the young gentleman to Nantes at all, seeing his state, addressed him civilly, telling him that two miles in advance there was the village of Le Breuil Bertin, where he would find a good clean cabaret, and he could both have an excellent breakfast and repose for a few hours in comfort.

"I thought we were to go to Nantes as fast as we could," said Master Ned.

"Monsieur is the master," replied the man, "I was only told to see you safe to Nantes, and show you all attention on the road. So I shall certainly take your orders as to where we shall stop, and how long. At all events we must feed the horses at Le Breuil."

"Well then, I will stay and rest there," said Edward, very glad to obtain time for somewhat clearer and more composed reflection

than the state of his brain had heretofore permitted; and at Le Breuil they accordingly paused.

In the two hundred and odd revolutions of the great humming-top which have since taken place, Le Breuil Bertin, which was then a very flourishing village, with a pretty church and a very tolerable inn, and at a little distance a Royal Abbey, has become a mere hamlet, but then the cabaret appeared a blessed haven of repose to Edward Langdale; every thing had a clean and smiling air, and the very sight was a refreshment. He ordered breakfast, which was in those days always accompanied by wine, and though he ate little, he felt stronger for the meal. Then, after calling Pierrot apart and admonishing him in regard to brandy, he said he should like to rest for a few hours, and was shown to a chamber where was a bed of wool, as soft as down. It is true that there was but one staircase leading to the room assigned him, and that Le Breuil being

built upon a gentle hill, and the inn upon the edge of the hill, the windows had a fall of thirty feet below them—quite as good, under ordinary circumstances, as iron bars. But Edward did not meditate escape just then, and all he expected was thought and repose. Weariness and wakefulness are sometimes strangely combined. Too tired to sleep, say people, very often, and they say rightly, but it generally happens—at least in my own case—that fatigue of mind has been added to fatigue of body, when we cannot woo to our pillow “tired nature’s sweet restorer.” We have been spurring both horses so hard that their sides are sore. So it was with Edward Langdale. He could not close an eye, he could not think—at least collectedly. His mind went rambling about first to one subject of consideration then to another, without resting upon any. This continued for about two hours, but when the Sergeant, Corporal, or

whatever he was, looked in to see whether he would like to go to mass, the young gentleman was as sound asleep as he could be, and did not hear the opening or closing door.

Now the soldier was a native of Le Breuil Bertin, and moreover had been brought up a Protestant—born a Protestant, I had better have said; for I fear me much that both in regard to religion and politics, birth has a good deal to do with the matter. However, being but an indifferent controversialist, and meeting with a wise Catholic priest, and having some interest in the army, and the greater part of the population being of the Romish church, he had four good reasons for being converted, and he was so. But the worthy man was mild in his apostacy, and, as a native of Le Breuil Bertin, did not care how long a gentleman, whether Huguenot or Papist, kept him there, nor whether he went to mass or conventicle.

Thus Edward was suffered to slumber undisturbed from nine till one, when he turned on his other side without waking, and then from one till six, when a little noise about the inn made some impression on his senses.

The sun, by this time, was so far down as to have left an eye of grey in the sky, but it was not quite dark; and Edward had just swung his feet over the edge of the bed, and was rubbing his eyes, with a certain doubtfulness whether he would lie down again or not, when his door was opened, and the soldier appeared, supporting in a boy dressed in a loose black velvet over-coat, and asking, "Pray sir, is this your page?" Edward started forward at once and took her hand, answering, "Certainly—How came he here?"

The man was about to reply; but as he uttered the first words Lucette began to sink, and the colour quite forsook her lips. Edward caught her in his arms before she fell, and laid her gently on the bed from which he had just

risen, saying, "Send Pierrot here, good sir—my servant I mean."

The man smiled slightly, but departed, and before Pierrot appeared, Lucette revived, saying, in a low, faint voice, "I am so tired, Edward, and have been so frightened. I fear I have betrayed you by my weakness."

"Get some wine, Pierrot," exclaimed the lad, as the man entered. "Or stay you here and I will see for it myself. Fear not, dear Lucette, all will go well."

They were vague words of comfort enough, such as a man speaks when his only trust is in Providence, but yet they comforted Lucette, and some water which Pierrot held to her lips did her good also; but, to tell the truth, that which revived her most was the reappearance of Edward Langdale. He brought wine with him—the first he could find; but he could hardly pour out a glassful, when the good mistress of the house entered and stayed his hand, saying, "Leave her to me, young gentleman.

Do not be foolish. Your secret shall be safe with me upon my honor—if it be a secret; but all the world can see this is no boy. I have girls myself, and will treat her like a daughter," and, gently putting the two men out, she shut and bolted the door.

CHAPTER XI.

"My good sir," said Edward Langdale, addressing the chief of the guard, whom he found conversing with his troopers, whom he had not before seen; "My good sir, I think it will be necessary for me to change my mode of travelling. I have just recovered from a severe illness, and am still weak. So much riding on horseback fatigues me, as you may see by my long sleep to-day; and I would be glad

if I could procure a coach. You can guard us well or better then than if we continue as we have begun—Why are you smiling?”

The last words had a little tone of irritation in them, for Edward had remarked the previous smile with which the man had brought Lucette into his chamber, and he had arrived at that point of the road to Love that he felt vexed at the very thought of any reflexion upon her name or character.

But the soldier answered civilly, “I was thinking, sir, that if you can, being sick and weak, keep such a tight hold as you did last night upon Guillaume Bluet’s wrist, what sort of a grip you must take when you are well and strong. But as to a carrosse, there is none in the village, and we shall have to send to Aligre, or Marans, as it is sometimes called, to get one, and Aligre is three leagues off. However, we can very well stop the night, if you please.”

“Well, have the kindness to send for one,” said the youth. “There is a piece of gold for

the messenger, and I will pay the owner well. Let it be over early—by day-break, if possible; for I am anxious to arrive at Nantes soon, as I shall certainly be liberated from this sort of captivity there."

It were vain to deny that the arrival of Lucette, while it relieved his mind considerably in one respect, embarrassed it considerably in another. Lucette was safe, but could he ensure that she would continue so? What was he to do with her? What would become of her at Nantes if he were imprisoned there, or perhaps executed? All these questions he put to himself, and they were difficult to answer. Still, to treat the matter commercially, when he put down on the one side of the account all the difficulties and dangers, and on the other, the happiness of knowing she was safe, and the delight of having her with him, he could not, for the life of him, think the balance was against him. But then it was evident that poor Lucette's disguise had not the effect

of a disguise at all, and Edward was as thoughtful of her reputation as a prude. Oh sweet delicacy of early youth, how soon thou art rubbed off in the grating commerce of the world! I fear me that it rarely happens—with men at least—that the soft bloom remains on the plum a day after it is separated from the parent tree. Yet it was so with Edward still; for he had hitherto had to deal with the harder, not the softer things of life; and his nascent love for Lucette rendered the feeling still more fine and sensitive. *Sequitur Deum*, however, could only be his motto; for at present he had no power over his own fate.

With these thoughts and feelings he returned to the door of the room where he had slept so long, and knocked for admission, which was given at once.

"She is getting quite well now," said the good landlady, "but you will have to stay here the night, for she is too tired to go further." Edward explained to her that he had sent for

a coach, which could not arrive till the following morning; and, sitting down beside Lucette, began to converse with her in English, while the landlady continued at the table, listening to the strange language, and apparently trying if she could make anything of it. In that tongue Lucette, whose sweet lips had regained their colour and her beautiful eyes their sparkle, told him all that happened to her since he had left her—how with anxiety and fear she had remained in her place of concealment hour after hour, till near the dawn of day—how good Jacques Beaupré had tried to console and comfort her in vain, till at length suspense became unendurable, and she had determined to go forth and try to pass the royalists' lines herself—how Jacques had remonstrated—how she had persisted, and how she had not gone three hundred yards before she was challenged, stopped, and taken to the little house occupied by Monsieur de Lude, who commanded in that

quarter. Her companion, she said, had disappeared at the very moment of her own arrest, and she did not know what had become of him. Monsieur de Lude, however, was an elderly man, and very courteous, who asked her a number of questions.

"And what, in Heaven's name, did you tell him, dear Lucette?" asked Edward.

"Not much," replied the sweet girl, "I determined at once that I would speak no French, and as he could speak no English, he gained nothing from me. At length he put pen and paper before me, and made signs to me to write down who and what I was. I then wrote that I was your page, who had remained behind you, being frightened, but who, repenting of my cowardice, had come on, thinking to overtake you. The old gentleman sent for some of his officers who knew a little English; and between them they made out what I had written.

"Did you write my own name, dear girl?" asked Edward, with some anxiety.

"Nay," replied Lucette, "I wrote the name you told us was in your passport—Sir Peter Apsley; and I described you as well as I could. Then, to my great joy, I heard Monsieur de Lude say to the officers 'I am afraid we have made a mistake in stopping him. That was clearly the Cardinal's safe conduct, and we must send the page after him—Riche-lieu dislikes too much, as well as too little zeal; and on my life it is likely we shall be scolded for not having properly revered his signature.' I do think, dear Edward, I could have persuaded him to let us all go on our way if I had dared to speak French to him; but after having pretended not to understand a word, I was afraid."

Now good casuists have clearly shewn two things, that it is perfectly justifiable to deceive on some occasions; and that we had better not do it on any. The present is a good eluci-

dation. If ever a girl was justified in feigning, Lucette was so ; but still she got nothing by it, except a long ride, in the way she did not want to go ; and she lost all the advantages of her little innocent trick by the very trick itself. So it seems to me at least, although there may be people who differ with me on the subject, and if so, I beg to state that I will not enter with them into a further discussion of the subject—at least on paper.

One advantage, however, which neither Edward nor Lucette then knew, but which had accrued from her interview with Monsieur de Lude, was this. The officers had let the men understand that they were all very doubtful as to whether they had done right or wrong in ignoring the name of Richelieu—then becoming very terrible—written at the bottom of the safe conduct, and that therefore the young gentleman and his suite were to be treated with the utmost respect and consideration. The soldiers who had escorted Lucette had

communicated this to those who had guarded Edward Langdale, and the intelligence was not without a great effect upon men who knew that those who present themselves with agreeable intelligence find a good reception and often a reward, whereas those who come upon a blundering errand get kicks for their only recompense. To return to my story, however ; I will not dwell upon the passing of that night. As far as Edward and Lucette were concerned it passed as properly and as discreetly as possible, and if any one suspects the contrary it is the fault of his own imagination. The next morning, though not exactly at daybreak, the coach, or carosse as the people called it, arrived from Marans, and all was soon ready for departure ; Edward and his pretty page took their seats within ; Pierrot mounted, led one horse beside the carriage ; one of the guards led another, and the whole cortege set out for Nantes at a brisk pace of three miles an hour, or thereabouts. There are other countries in the

world where one can still go at the same pace ; but as Nantes was about ninety miles distant it was evident three days must be consumed in the journey. Now it was very pleasant to Edward Langdale to sit side by side with Lucette, especially when by way of emphasis to any thing of particular importance he was saying, he took her soft little hand in his—indeed it often rested there quite tranquilly for full ten minutes—and as he had no inclination to arrive at Nantes at all, he certainly did not hurry the horses. Youth has the power of removing evil days—of multiplying the intervening hours ; and the first part of the journey was very sweet to both, although the gloomy looking Nemesis of Nantes was still before them. But after Sévigné was passed and Marana, where they only stopped to water the horses, the two young people began to think seriously—somewhat sadly, of the future, and to consider whether it would not both be prudent and possible to escape. Now this change of

thoughts and purposes probably took place from the simple fact of both being refreshed and reinvigorated by repose; but certainly things began to seem quite practicable to Edward, and even very feasible, which had before seemed impossible, or highly perilous. The country now became fertile in windmills, country houses, and canals, and Edward proposed to get out and ride a little. Lucette gazed at him timidly with a "do not leave me" look; but he explained to her that he was going to sound the leader of this escort, and she made no opposition. He was soon mounted and rode forward with the good Bertinois, saying in a gay tone, "I am not going to run away,"

The man made no reply till they were out of earshot of the rest, but then he answered, "If you did, Monsieur, I should not try to stop you—but others might." There was so much gained. "Perhaps the others might be out of the way at some place upon the road," said

Edward, "and I dare say we might slip away easy, without being noticed."

He looked keenly in the man's face as he spoke, but the soldier did not move a muscle.

"Perhaps such a thing might be done," said the man, after pausing for a moment or two, "We are not told to watch you very closely; and during one of the nights it would not be very difficult—But of course you do not intend to try."

"I am not very fond of going to Nantes," said Master Ned.

"Why?" asked the soldier, with an air of great simplicity.

"First, because it is out of my way," answered Edward, "secondly, because I have no clothes with me, and I should have to appear at the court; and thirdly, because, probably, before I get to Nantes, my purse, which is not now very full, will probably be emptier by a thousand livres."

The reason last assigned seemed to have

some weight with the man. "It is bad to have an empty purse," he said, "but come sir, those cannot be the only reasons. I wish you would give one which might touch an honest man and a loyal subject of the King's."

A bright thought struck Edward at that moment. He knew not whether the man was trying to entrap him into a confession of some sinister design, or whether in good faith he sought as many a man will do—an excuse to himself for acting as he wished. Now it was evident that Lucette's disguise was of no avail—that the soldier himself knew that she was no page, and that the truth would be made manifest at Nantes. Riding closer to him, therefore he said in a low confidential voice. "It is not for myself, I so much care; but cannot you comprehend that I have got one with me whom I would not have discovered for the world."

"Whew!" cried the soldier with a long whistle, "I see, I see! and then holding out

his hand to Edward, he added, "Count upon me, Monsieur—Count upon me, I can manage the other men. But how happens it that neither of you have any baggage? Saprissi, you must have come away in a great hurry; and you are both very young."

"The baggage was left with my other servant, who stayed behind, but was to follow soon. I trust it is at Niort by this time."

"A conversation of an hour's length ensued, in the course of which Edward Langdale convinced himself that his companion was sincere in his professions, and at the end of that time he returned to the carriage, carrying with him hope nearly touching joy.

The party were now entering, or had entered upon, a tract of country singular in its nature, its aspects, and its habits. It is called "*Les Marais*," the marshes; and, as it may perhaps have something to do with our story, it must have a very brief description. This might be difficult to give, as I have never seen more

than the extreme verge of the district, but luckily at my hand lies the account of one who knew it well, had passed long months there, and who lived much nearer the times of which I write. Thus he speaks: "The inhabitant of the marshes is taller than the inhabitant of the plain, he is stouter, his limbs are more massive; but he wants both health and agility. He is coarse, apathetic, and narrow in his views. A cabin of reeds, a little meadow, some cows, a boat, which serves him for fishing, and often stealing forage along the river banks, a gun, to shoot wild fowl, are all his fortune, and his only means of subsistence. Exposed continually, at his own fireside, to all sorts of maladies, his constitution must be very strong not to give way entirely. His food is barley bread mixed with rye, abundance of vegetables, salt meat and curds. His habitual drink is the water of the canals and ditches, a source of innumerable maladies. The agricultural proprietors, or great farmers, known by

the name of cabiners "*Cabiniers*," lead a very different life, and do not deny themselves any of the comforts of life.

"The inhabitants of this picturesque abode appear, at first sight, the most wretched of mankind. Their cottages of brush and mud, are covered with reeds, unknown to the rest of the world, upon a tongue of land of from twenty-five to thirty paces wide, they live in the depths of inaccessible labyrinths, with their wives, their children, and their cattle. The silence of these swampy deserts, which is only broken by the cry of the water-fowl; the mysterious shadow spread over the canals by the intertwined boughs above them; the paleness and miserable air of the people; that narrow border, which seems to place an immense interval between them and all mankind; the sombre hue of the landscape, all inspires, at the first glance, a painful and melancholy feeling which it is difficult to get rid of.

But on penetrating into the interior, the freshness of these crables, the meandering of these waterpaths, the innumerable varieties of birds one meets nowhere but there, causes the first sensations to be followed by a feeling of peaceful retirement, which is not without its charm."

Such was the scene, or rather the country, upon which Edward and Lucette entered, just as the sun was within half an hour of setting, when every little ridge or hillock cast a long blue shadow upon the brown moor, and the many intricate canals and little rivers acted as mirrors to the glories of the eastern sky, flashing back the last red rays, as if rubies were dissolved in the calm waters. It was a fine country to escape in.

CHAPTER XII.

As much consideration and caution were necessary in proceeding, after the sun was set, as a young man requires on his first outset in a court. The darkness was as profound, there were as many unseen dangers, pitfalls, ponds, and swamps around, and though the stars were all out and shining, no queenly moon was in the sky to light one on the long way. Night after night she was now rising at a later hour, and the beams which had cheered the course

of the two young travellers on their sail from Rochelle, would not be renewed ere their resting place for the night was reached. At length, about eight o'clock, on looking from the portiere of the coach, Edward thought he saw either a little mount or a heavy pile of building before him, and in about ten minutes the horses' feet clattered over the stone pavement of a court. The leader of the escort had gone on before, and now as he and his fair companion alighted, they found the good soldier standing under a heavy stone portal conversing with a man in a monk's gown.

"It looks like a prison," said Lucette as she gazed up by the light of a lantern.

She spoke in a low voice, but her words caught the ear of the monk who replied.

"This is the Abbey of Moreilles, young gentleman, I will take you first to the stranger's parlour and then will shew you round the building, if you like, for your escort tells me you propose to go on by daybreak, and you

should not miss the opportunity of seeing so famous an edifice."

Lucette replied that she was very tired and should prefer to lie down to rest, but Edward caught eagerly at the proposal, from several motives—first he was anxious to keep Lucette as far as possible from the monk's eye, and was afraid that her sweet voice might betray her—and then he had his reasons for observing accurately every part of the building.

"Well, well, I will take you round in a minute or two," replied the monk, "but I must first see that some of the cells are ready; for this good gentleman tells me that you two young people are very devout, and would like best to sleep in cells where saints have lived and died, in the odour of sanctity. Here, here is the parlour. Let me light a lamp. Most of the brethren have retired, for it has been very hot this evening. What changes of weather, good lack! Yesterday was as cold as Noël and to night it is as warm as St. John's."

While he spoke he lighted a small lamp with shaking hands, and then left the three in the little room together, going himself to prepare the cells.

"Now listen, young people," said the soldier, speaking quick, but low, as soon as the monk was gone. "Keep ready and wakeful and at three o'clock, it shall go hard but you shall find a boat with a man in it, upon the canal at the back of the Abbey. Go with that man wherever he rows you."

"But how shall I find the boat or the canal either?" asked Edward, "remember I have never been here before."

"As we go round the building," replied the other, "I will show you the door which is always left open for the droves who sleep in this wing of the Abbey, to find their way to the church at Matins. I will pinch your arm as we pass it. God wot, if they did not leave it open, their winking eyes would lead them into the canal. That old fellow must make haste or we

shall have my comrades with us; and it were better not till Master Page has gone to his cell. You had better give them plenty of drink, young gentleman, that they may stupify themselves and sleep heavily to-morrow morning. I have got two miles on foot to go to see a friend, but will be back in an hour or two. Ply them well while I am gone, but mind you, keep your own head clear."

"But shall I find any liquor here?" asked Edward, in some surprise.

The soldier nodded his head, and pointed to a number of stains upon the table, saying, "I have had more than one roaring bowl in this very room. Those stains were not made with water. Every thing can be had for money in a *moustier*."

"But I had better give you what I promised, before the monk comes back," said Edward; the word money awakening many other ideas.

"Let me see how much you have got," said the man; you will need some for your time

selves, and besides there is that long thin fellow with a red face—that servant of yours. Do not let him drink—Let us see.”

Edward took out his purse of doe-skin, which now contained about seventeen hundred livres in gold—what between the purchase of the horses and various expenses at the inns, the rest was all spent, though it was better furnished when he left Rochelle, and there was more in his bags, probably lost for ever.

“That is not enough to give me a thousand livres,” said the man, “but the three horses are worth something. That one you ride is a good one, and so is the young lady’s—the page I mean. Give me five hundred, and write me a promise of the horses, for the rest of the sums I have advanced—the horses to be given up to me when you get to the end of your journey—which will be here, I suppose, but which they will understand as Nantes. That will give me a right to claim them.”

Now it is quite possible that one, if not

more of my sagacious readers will be inclined to think that I have been drawing an inconsistent character. It is very true ; the soldier was a right generous and a kind hearted fellow. He liked to do a good turn. He liked, especially, to help two young lovers—by the way he had been crossed in love himself, though his history would be too long to be told here—and yet he was not unwilling to take money out of their pockets when they had little enough, and to secure three horses for his own advantage. It was very inconsistent!—very inconsistent indeed! But I have now lived a tolerable number of years in the world, and all my life I have been looking for consistent men, and have not found more than six at the utmost. The fact is, man is a bundle—a bundle of very contrary qualities, to say nothing of the mere absolute opposition of body and soul in the mass. There are packages of good feelings and packages of bad feelings, rolls of wit and rolls of dullness ; papers full of sense

and papers full of nonsense ; a lump of generosity here and a lump of selfishness there ; and all tied up so tightly together, that in a damp and foggy world, they sooner or later mould and mildew each other.

Thus if I hear of a great man doing a little action, or a wise one committing a foolish one, instead of crying out, " How inconsistent ! " I say it is very natural. Now if it be very natural every where, it is more natural in France ; for having inhabited that beautiful country and lived amongst her gallant and intellectual people a great part of my life, I have come to the conclusion that the most varied creature upon the face of the earth, *per se*—in himself—in his own nature and composition—is a Frenchman.

While the soldier has been making all his arrangements with Master Ned ; and while we have been discussing the knotty point of his inconsistency, &c., the old monk with the lantern in his hand had been getting ready two

cells, at the farther end of the long corridor, and the troopers and Pierrot, together with the driver of the coach have been taking care of the horses. But the monk having the least to do—for the furniture of a cell is not usually superabundant nor its bed difficult to make—returns first and conducts Lucette to her sleeping place without the slightest idea that she is any thing but a very pretty boy ; for his eyes are not very clear and the lantern dimmer than his eyes and the lamp upon the table duller than the lantern. Edward Langdale accompanied them to see her cell. It was next to his own—a pleasant proximity : and telling her he would presently bring her some refreshment, he left her. As he walked slowly back with the monk, he came upon the subject of some stronger liquor than water, at which the old man looked shocked ; but upon Edward alluding to the stains upon the table and bestowing a donation—entirely for the Abbey—the ferocity of his temperance abated, and he ran to the refectory

man or some other competent officer with whom he shared his gains, and informed him what a generous young gentleman they had got under their roof. The supper did not suffer in consequence; but while it was preparing, Edward and the soldier accompanied the old man through church and cloisters, passages and corridors. Neither gained much knowledge of architecture or of the particular Abbey of Moreilles. I would advise no one who wishes to criticise that of Westminster to go there at night, with nothing but a bad tallow candle in a dirty lantern, and though I have it upon good authority that before the conflagration, Moreilles was decorated with the most beautiful flamboyant arches, mouldings hardly surpassed in richness, and moreover twenty-six cluster columns of prodigious height, with each one an exquisite capital totally different from all the others, Edward saw nothing but dark vaults, masses of stone, and a door. But that door was all he wanted to see, and as he passed it

the soldier gave him a good hard pressure on the arm. It was luckily within about ten paces of Lucette's cell.

However, on reaching the stranger's parlour, the little party found the troopers and Pierrot and the driver and three more monks, and what was more to the purpose a table laid with several large pies, and a quantity of barley bread. The means of potation had not yet appeared but tarried not long; and a meal ensued which I need not further describe than by saying that the pies comprised rabbits and wild ducks—and none of the unlearned can imagine what an excellent thing a wild-duck pie can be, made by the mere process of skinning the ducks.

After a few mouthfuls the leader of the guard rose and left the room, saying he must go and see his cousin, who as they all knew lived hard by; and the rest of the troopers set to serious work upon first some sour wine and then upon some of that good spirit which has crowned

the name of Nantes with a certain sort of immortality. Poor Pierrot, it was a sore temptation for him, especially while his young Master was gone to carry some refreshment *to the page* ; but he resisted during the very short period of Edward's absence, and Master Ned's eye was a strong corroboration of resolutions after his return. The monks tasted at first silyly and then more boldly, and Edward drew from them one important fact that there were very few Brethren in the convent, some of them being absent on *quite*, some on leave, and the Abbey never having been very full since the Abbacy—as was so common in France—had been bestowed upon a well known painter of Paris—a layman.

There was some deep drinking that night ; but still Pierrot, though he could have emptied the most capacious flagon there at an easy draught, maintained the combat against habit gloriously, till at length, just as the leader of the party returned, at the end of the two hours,

finding himself weak with labour or resistance, he retired to rest, after having received a hint from his master which happily he was in a state to profit by—happily indeed for him! The primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, men have strewed, in their imagination, with all sorts of sweet things; but take my word for it, it is paved by *Example*—that most dangerous and slippery of all asphalts. Luckily for him the troopers did not care a fig whether he drank or not; and thus all he had to resist was the sight of outstretched arms and full cups; but he had something better—he had the warning of rolling eyes and hiccupping throats, and maudlin faces and embarrassed tongues, which he had never seen before, when he was himself sober enough to appreciate them fully. “Well, drunkenness,” he thought, as he left the room, “is a very beastly thing, it is true.”

The monks withdrew nearly at the same time; and I am well pleased to say, that

although they had shown during that night amongst the pies and the pottles no narrow objections, to either those carnal or those spiritual things which some castes of Hindoos call the "creature comforts of life," not one of them had an uneven step or an unsteady head. Probably they drank seldom; for those who drink often deprive themselves of the power of drinking at all—soberly.

The coach driver was soon under the table; and the troopers though most of them, when the last drop provided was emptied from the flask, could make their way by diagonals to the dormitory assigned to them, were in a state which promised no early rising on the following day; and Edward and his friendly soldier parted about eleven o'clock, the latter merely saying, "We shall have a heavy storm to-night. The clouds are rolling up like distant mountains. But all the better for your purpose. Remember three!"

The consequences! Good God! what a

frightful thing it is to consider what—under an overruling hand and will omnipotent—may be the consequences of the smallest deed we do!—the consequences immediate—proximate—future. How many lives—*what an amount* of misery—how much damnation, may depend upon a light word, an idle jest, a sportive trick.

Should such a consideration forbid us to act and do—to resolve and perform? Far from it. Man is an active being and his life is deeds. Each moment must have its thought or its action, or the whole is sleep; but the consideration of that strange thing CONSEQUENCE—that overruling of our deeds to ends that we see not, should teach us so to frame thought, word, and act, that be the consequences what they may, we may be able at the great end of all to say boldly, “I did it in an honest heart.” God himself is responsible for the result, if man acts with purity of intent.

Not one man in that small room, who had

that night "sinned as it were with a cart rope," ever saw the dawning of the morning; and it was a heavy thought to Edward Langdale for many a year after,—“What share had I in this?” For himself he took the little lamp which had been left for him, and sought the cell where his pallet lay. But he had no thought of sleep. As he went along the corridor, with the rays just gleaming upon the fretted stone work, something like a flash reddened the dim panes of the painted windows, and some seconds afterwards a distant roar was heard, as if of a heavy sea rolling along an extended shore. “It will thunder,” he said to himself, but he thought of it no more, and, opening the door of the cell, on the little table beneath the window appeared the missal, and the skull and cross-bones—the *memento mori* of the cloister.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE table, the book, the pallet, the grinning emblem of death, and a little black crucifix, hung up against the wall, were, with the exception of a large pitcher of very clear cold water, all that the cell contained; and yet it was by no means without ornament, for each of those chambers looking to the western cloister had a window, divided into two by a beautiful cluster mullion and garnished all round, even in the interior, with mouldings a foot in depth.

The original small panes of stained glass were also there, but Edward could at first form no idea of the redness of the colouring, for although the moon had now risen several hours, the face of Heaven was black with clouds, and all without was darkness. About five minutes after he had entered the cell, however, the whole interior of the little room, where the feeble oil lamp had only made the darkness visible, was pervaded by intense light, and an image of the stained glass window was thrown upon the floor and opposite wall in colours the most intense and beautiful. Still the thunder did not follow for several seconds ; but when it did come the roar was awful. It seemed as if some one was pouring rocks and mountains in a stream upon the roof of the Abbey, making the very solid walls and foundations shake. Edward drew forth his watch—one of the rude contrivances of those days, but with the great advantage of having the figures on the dial plain and distinct—and, holding it to the lamp,

perceived it was a quarter past one. Lucette must be awake, he thought, "she could not sleep through such a crash as that ; I will wait five minutes and then go and call her."

In the meantime the flashes of lightning became more frequent, some followed by heavy thunder, some passing away in silence, till at length they grew so rapid in succession that one could not attach the roar to the clap. Edward's first knock brought Lucette, completely dressed, to the door, and he was surprised to see her cheek so pale. The thought of danger had never entered his own mind ; but he clearly saw that she was much agitated. " You are not afraid, dear girl ?" he asked, " It is but a little thunder."

" It is not fear, but awe, Edward," she said, " but is it time to go—I am ready."

" Not yet," he answered, " but we may as well stay here in the passage. If the storm should alarm the monks, and any one comes out we can say we are frightened too,"

"Is not that some one crossing there?" asked Lucette, but almost as she spoke a sudden flash showed that what she took for a man was but a short pillar. Edward drew her closer to him and put his arm round her. She did not feel at all angry, but rather clung to his side. Fear is a great smoother away of all prudery, and to say sooth, Lucette had very little of it to be planed down. The fact is, she was innocent in heart and mind as a young child; and innocence is never prudish—nor is real delicacy.

"Ne fiez vous a l'Angelus

"Mais craignez les bois et les orages."

says an old French song, about two lovers somewhat similarly situated; but Edward and Lucette ran no danger from anything but the lightning. It, however, was now really terrific. The clouds, crammed with electricity, were evidently directly over the Abbey, and every instant the blaze was running across the windows, the various colours of which gave the

flashes the effect of fireworks, more brilliant than any that ever were constructed by the hand of man. At length a sound, not like the roaring roll of thunder, but an explosion, as it were, as if some mighty cannon *had burst*, shook the very ground on which they stood. Then came a moment's pause ; and then a peculiar sound—it might be thunder, or it might not—but it seemed more like the noise of stones rolling rapidly and heavily over each other, and then falling from a height to the ground. The next instant a heavy bell began to toll, but ceased after three or four strokes had been struck, mingling strangely with a peal of thunder which was echoing through the building.

A spirit of confusion now seemed to seize upon the Abbey, the door at the end of the corridor was thrown open ; monks were seen hurrying across, moving a little way up the passage, and disappearing by another door ; there were voices calling and screaming ; and Edward thought he could distinguish

groans and shrieks, while ever and anon a little bell was heard ringing with a small tinkling sound ; and in strange discord with all the rest, a solemn strain of music burst upon the ear whenever the door on the left was opened.

Edward tried to ascertain from one of the passing monks, what was the matter ; but he could get no intelligible answer, and it was with infinite satisfaction that at length he saw Pierrot appear, coming towards them in haste.

“ The great tower has been struck, Sir,” said the man, in answer to his enquiries, and heaven knows how much of it has tumbled down over the other cloisters. One of the monks is killed they say, and several other people are crushed under the stones ; but what is worse than all, just as they were ringing the great bell, they found out that the lightning, when it struck, had set the tower on fire ; for the rope broke short, and the end that came down upon the sacristan's head, was burning. There is no hope of getting it put out, for some are carrying

off the ornaments of the church, some are praying, some are singing, some are whipping themselves; and the best thing we can do is to get out to the bank of the canal, if we can find the way; for though the hour you told me is not quite come, we can wait there more safely than here where we are likely to have the roofs and buttresses on our heads every minute."

Edward pressed Lucette a little closer to him, and whispered something to which she answered, "Any where you will—Trust you! Oh yes!" and getting her large hat from the cell, Edward placed it on her head, so as to conceal, as far as possible her wonderfully luxuriant hair, and leading her down the passage, opened the door which the soldier had pointed out to him. Instantly a flash of lightning crossed their eyes; but it served to show, though it lived but for a second, the dull heavy features of the Marais, with—not one, but half-a-dozen—streams of zigzag lightning playing through the sky—

some, as the levenbolt is usually represented, darting down to earth like a flaming javelin—sometwisting into all shapes, and even running up like fiery serpents disporting themselves in the horrors of the storm. What was of more importance, however, to Edward and Lucette, that flash displayed close before them one of those long rows of willows and ash trees which in that part of the country denoted the course of one of the large canals, and also showed a break in the line of wood where the monks probably went down to fish from their own boats.

All the noises of the Abbey were now heard far more distinctly, the thunder notwithstanding; and through every window of the great church, with its tall, square tower, might be seen a red ominous glare. But onward Edward supported Lucette, with Pierrot feeling his way before them, till a few steps brought them to the very verge of the water. Two boats were fastened to the bank by chains; but there was no boatman apparent, and Edward and his

good servant consulted for a moment—with a running accompaniment of lightning—as to whether it would not be better to unloose one of the skiffs and seek safety somewhere.

“I can break the chain in a moment, with a big stone, Master Ned,” said Pierrot, “but as we do not know where to go we had better wait for some one to show us. Master George Brin, the good corporal, promised that some one should be here at two, and depend upon it he will keep his word—Hark! I hear oars. It is not quite two yet; but you had better put the young lady under that ash tree for it is beginning to rain. Thank God that will soon put the thunder out, and pray Heaven it quenches the fire in the church too. Those monks are good simple souls and merry.”

Not more than two minutes after he had done speaking, a boat came up quickly to the little landing place, rowed by an elderly man, as far as Edward could see by the lightning, who carefully avoided touching the Abbey boats,

but as soon as he backed his oars, looked round over the bank.

"Ah, there you are!" he said, in French, which, though it was not French at all, was a jargon quite understandable. "Get in—get in quick. Here, young man, give me your hand," and catching Lucette's arm he lifted her in, rather than aided her to embark. Edward and Pierrot followed, and without another word the boatman pushed off. It was all over in less than thirty seconds, and the boat had made some two hundred yards over the water, the man pushing her along with a pole, before he relinquished that instrument and sat down as if to resume his oars. The rain was now beginning to fall thick, in heavy drops, and the boatman, as he pushed his bark along, had been scanning his party of passengers earnestly, "Here," he said, at length, dragging something large and shaggy from beneath one of the seats. "Here, you one in the large hat, put this on, or

you will get wet. The sky may come down in drops without going through that."

"What is it?" asked Lucette, taking what the man offered, but not comprehending what it was.

"A *peau de bique*, to be sure," replied the boatman. "You are the girl that Georgy Brin told me of; are you not? I must not let you get wet, for he says you are weakly. 'Tis a mad business any how!" and with this sage reflexion, he began to handle his oars again.

Edward aided his fair companion to envelop herself in the water-proof garment, then, and still common in that part of France; and the boat shot on rapidly under the branches of the trees which may be said to have interlaced above them. For about a quarter of a mile all was darkness, but at the end of that distance, the boatman began to look up towards the sky wherever a small patch of the Heavens could be seen through the overhanging trees. Edward too, saw, from time to time, gleams of

red light upon the water ; and it seemed as if the sky itself had caught fire with the lightning, and would soon be one general blaze. Another quarter of a mile brought the travellers to a spot where were two reed cabins and an open space of ground round them ; and there the boatman lay upon his oars. All eyes were now turned towards the Abbey, where a sight at once sad and grand presented itself. The top of the great square tower, like an immense altar, bore a pyramid of flame up to the skies ; and from every window and loophole issued forth a tongue of fire, licking the gray walls. The windows even of the church were painted in red upon the stone work, wherever the cloud of smoke which surrounded the whole of the lower part of the building, like a vast shroud, suffered the masonry to appear.

“ Alas for the poor monks,” said the boatman, with an unaffected sigh, if they did not do much good, they did not do any harm ; and we might have had worse people amongst us.

That Abbey had stood well nigh four hundred years, they tell me ; and it was never touched by lightning until now—doubtless because they had given it to a lay Abbot, and he turns all the revenues to the works of man, which were devoted to the works of God. Well, we cannot help the poor souls ;” and, without further thought of the burning edifice, he plied his oars again, and the boat cut her way smoothly through the glassy waters, leaving long fiery ripples behind her.

Two miles more of hard rowing brought the party to a small farm, where two or three of the same huts of mud, bushes, and reeds, appeared close together on the bank ; and the rower paused before the largest of the humble edifices, calling in a loud voice to persons who might not be without earshot, but who were certainly not within sight, to inform them that he would not be home till daybreak. “ The rain is failing,” he said, as if speaking to himself, “ and the whole Abbey will be down, that is clear.”

He then rowed on, pursuing, for some three hundred yards, the larger canal ; but at the end of that distance, turning into a very narrow and sinuous channel, where he laid down his oars and propelled the boat solely with the pole. The labour seemed hard, and the progress slow, and Edward took the moment to ask, quietly, where they were going.

"To la Caponniere, to be sure," replied the man, "did you not know that?"

"No," replied the youth, "Monsieur Brin merely told me that he would procure me a boat a two o'clock to carry us to a place of safety."

"Well here is the boat," answered the man, "and la Caponniere is a place of safety. There are not better people in the world than old Madame Brin and her son and daughters. They are cousins of his, you know, and by this time they are all ready to receive you. She was his cousin before her marriage, you know, and then she married his first cousin, who left

Niort in the time of the troubles, and so they are double cousins, you know."

But as Edward did not know anything about it, he thought it better not to shew his ignorance, and resumed his English conversation with Lucette.

The voyage, for we cannot call that a journey which was performed at night upon the water, was somewhat long and fatiguing to the boatman; but at length—it must have been at least four o'clock in the morning—after turning and twisting, and sometimes grating against the banks, there suddenly appeared a small star-like light, from what seemed the window of a better house than any they had yet passed, which, skipping over various indistinct objects, rested more fully on a small boat at the shore. Some one started up in the skiff as their own approached, their boatman threw them a rope, and they were speedily drawn up to the bank and moored.

"Come this way," said the lad who had been

waiting for them, holding out a great coarse hand to Lucette. "Here, mother, they are come," and leading the poor girl on, followed by Edward, he conducted her through a little garden, in which various kitchen vegetables were more plentiful than flowers. Half way between the house and the canal they were met by a goodly-sized dame of forty, and a girl of some sixteen or seventeen, who took Lucette frankly in their arms and gave her a warm embrace. "So this is the young lady, poor thing," said the elder; but then immediately turning to the boatman, she enquired, eagerly, "What has been the meaning of all that red light out by the Abbey?"

"There's no Abbey by this time," answered the man, "but come, good dame, let us into your kitchen fire, if you've got one, and I will tell you all about it. We are all as wet as bull-frogs, except the girl, and I gave her my *peau de bique*." Thus saying, he pushed past the rest, and entered a large roomy kitchen,

well stored with every sort of salted and dried provisions, dependent from great racks suspended from the ceiling.

There a hearty welcome awaited the poor wayfarers; the fire, which had already gone out, was soon blown up into a cheerful blaze; warm soup was soon produced; and to Lucette the good dame of the house, though she weighed at least two hundred pounds, shewed the tenderness and gentleness associated solely by poets and romance writers with sylph-like forms and nymph-like graces. Her two good buxom girls, who, to very pretty faces, added in form a promise of future extent, worthy of the stock from which they sprang, joined in somewhat more shily, but with real kindness, and for the first time since they left Rochelle, Edward and Lucette experienced that feeling of security which to plagiarize a little, "wraps the whole heart up like a blanket."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE house in which Edward Langdale found himself on waking the next morning, was evidently one of those belonging to what they call in France the *cultivateurs propriétaires*, and in the *Marais* the *Cabaniers*, or farmers possessing the freehold of the land they till. He had been placed in a little room not larger than the Abbey cell ; but his bed had been most comfortable, and he might have slept late had not the youth whom they had found in the

boat the night before, and who was son of the good dame of the house, come in to ask how he had rested and to invite him to go to the further side of the farm to shoot some ducks for breakfast. Edward did not neglect the opportunity, thinking that he might obtain some important information by the way; but the youth, though perfectly and even profusely communicative, could tell him little of any thing beyond the precincts of the *Marais*, because he knew little. "They had heard," he said, "from his cousin George the night before, that, at some hour on that night, a young gentleman and lady, who had run away to get married, would come to their house for shelter and protection, which he bespoke for them particularly, and the good soldier had added many an injunction to secrecy and discretion. He had also asked that a boat might be sent with their neighbour Bennet to the Abbey wharf, with directions to take the young gentleman and lady without saying a word.

This was the amount of young Brin's foreign intelligence—for such to him it was—and as soon as it was given he proceeded to describe and eulogize his mother's farm, which he had not quitted more than two or three times in his life, and which he seemed to think both the richest and most beautiful spot on earth. Rich indeed it was, but to explain its sort of riches I must have recourse to that old author whom I have already quoted. I must premise, however, that the spot at which Edward Langdale now found himself, was just at the edge of what are called the dried marshes, were they join on to the *Marais Mouillans*, which at the time I write of were much more extensive than at present. The farm, then, of La Caponniere, comprised a portion of both; and as the *marais desséchés* have been already described from the account of an eye witness, I may be permitted a word or two from the same source in regard to the *Marais Mouillans*. "All these marshes," says my author, "are not equally inundated,

and, in consequence, all parts are not equally sterile. The highest parts of the *Marais Mouillans* are under water from the middle of October to the middle of June, and sometimes later. The lower parts never dry, and to make something of them they have been cut by innumerable canals, all communicating, and only separated from each other by earth banks of from twelve to fifteen feet in width, piled up from the excavated earth of the canals. These earth banks of prodigious fertility are many of them planted with willows, ashes, poplars, and sometimes oaks, so that one is often astonished to see so vigorous a forest springing out of the middle of the waters—" The traveller then goes on to tell the uses these forests are put to—how the faggots are sent to Rochelle and the Isle de Rhé, and how the trunks of the trees, cut into firewood, and called *casses de Marais*, are highly valued throughout the whole of the neighbouring country, and burn better than any other trees. But as the reader

will probably never dabble in the cultivation of the marshes of Bretagne, he shall be spared the details. My author, however, goes on to state that the farms vary in extent from two hundred and forty to twelve hundred acres, and that each is divided by little canals into squares of about thirty acres, each canal being large enough to carry a small boat.

Now fancy, dear Reader, what an interminable network of water communication these canals, each hidden from the other by trees and shrubs, must form—how impossible, for any but one born and bred in the country, to find one's way among them—how easy for any one acquainted with their involution, to baffle the most skilful pursuer, to lie hid from the eyes of the most clear sighted enemy. The Minotaur did not feel himself more safe in the depths of the Minotaur labyrinth than Edward Langdale after their morning's row; and Edward was more safe than the Minotaur.

“ Here, he thought,” we may stay till all pur-

suit is ended and all suspicions forgotten— till dear Lucette has recovered strength—and perhaps till I can communicate with Mauzé or Rochelle,”

All very well, as a matter of probability ! but were any thing is joined together by mere tacks—as is indeed the case with the fate of every one—and not alone with their fate for years or months, but for a single hour—it is much better to remember before we make any calculation at all, what tacks may fall out or get broken, and the whole piece of machinery tumble to atoms.

Edward Langdale could shoot a duck, and though the birding piece which the young farmer trusted to his hands was a single barreled gun, of rather primitive construction, and the shot merely bits of lead cut small, not a bird got away from him, more to the admiration than the liking of his companion, who had fancied that he could display some skill in the eyes of one whom he believed to be city bred.

However, the boat was plentifully laden before they returned, and the young farmer guided it back by a different course from the *Marais Mouillans*, to the firm land near the house, pointing out to Edward, with an air of pride and satisfaction, six or seven woolly beasts upon a tongue of the *terrein*, and telling him they were sheep.

At their return to the house they found the whole household up, with the exception of Lucette; but the result of their sport was very much commended, and one of the hearty breakfasts of the country was prepared. The living, indeed, seemed profuse, and what though the cooking was, for the land, somewhat coarse, yet it was French, and therefore better than it would have been anywhere else in the same circumstances. There were ducks, and good bacon and eggs, and fine fowls, and a ragout and plenty of galette. Alas! there was no coffee, no chocolate—nay, no tea; but there was excellent white wine of Loge, and

there was a good red wine of Fay Moreau ; for the age of hot slops had not yet arrived ; and Noah's discovery blessed the land within ten leagues of them.

Lucette joined them before they sat down, and, for some reason, she blushed more at her boy's dress when there were women round her, than she had done before ; but her cheek soon became pale, and Edward thought, with some alarm, she did not look well. She assured him, however, that she merely suffered from fatigue.

The meal was not concluded when several of the peasantry from the neighbouring country came to La Caponniere in their boats, bearing with them tidings of the fire of the preceding night, and of various other serious accidents which had occurred during the great storm. Numberless trees had been struck, and two men killed by the lightning ; but the facts of most interest—at least to Edward and Lucette—were those connected with the

destruction of the Abbey. One of the visitors had come that morning from Moreilles, and of course was the oracle of the occasion. Two-thirds of the great tower had fallen, he said, crushing the dormitory and the southern cloisters. The whole church was seriously injured, the Lady chapel being the only part preserved, and although the monks themselves, with one exception, had escaped unhurt, it was generally rumoured, the good man said, that some five or six persons—either guests or people who came to assist—had been crushed under the part of the tower which first fell. Who they were the peasant could not tell, but the mention of the sad fact set both Lucette and Edward upon the track of imagination. It was then for the first time that Edward perceived that Pierrot la Grange had not been at the breakfast table. On enquiring for him, Master Ned was answered by good Madame Brin's son, that his servant had gone with the man who had rowed them the night

before, to enquire about the fire—a very imprudent act, as it seemed to Edward; and yet he had a good deal of confidence in Pierrot's tact, which was not ill placed. About twelve, his long figure appeared in the kitchen, and now the whole details were given. They were interesting to the good Caponniere family, for the principal new fact was that Monsieur George Brin, their relation, was safe and well, and had set out for the lines under Mauzé. The other soldiers, he said, had perished, with the exception of one, who still lived, terribly mangled.

“He was so drunk when he left the parlour,” Pierrot said, “that he could not get to the assigned sleeping place, but fell upon the stairs, where he still lay when the Tower was struck. Thus, though sadly beaten by detached stones, he had escaped crushing by the great mass of masonry.”

Lucette felt very sorry for the poor soldiers, for hers was a very kindly and tender heart,

Edward gave them a passing "Poor fellows!" and at his heart wished he had not made them so drunk. But still, as man's mind is always a more business sort of article than a woman's, he argued, from the premises, that all chances of further pursuit and detention were at an end, and that though the troopers were to be pitied, their removal from this scene of care, was no misfortune to him.

Now all this shows, or may be supposed to show, that Master Ned was not of a very sensitive or sentimental disposition. In truth, dear reader, it only showed that he had mingled a good deal more with the world than most lads of his age, and that time and storms had hardened the outer shell. There was a good deal that was soft within—not about the head, but at the heart. That very night proved it, for Lucette, after having been somewhat languid all day, was suddenly seized, about seven o'clock, with a fit of shivering, and Edward had to behold the marsh fever in all its horrors.

Good old Madame Brin took upon herself to be physician—indeed there was no other within thirty miles except the barber at Fontenay-le-Comte, and he could not be got at. The eldest daughter was to be head nurse ; but Lucette had another, and a good one. She had nursed Edward through a severe illness and he was resolved to nurse her in return. Happily, they were good simple people there, and had no false notions of proprieties and decorums, so that Edward had his own way, and it was very sweet to poor Lucette to take her tisanes of *ecorce de chêne* and lime flowers from his hand, and to gaze into his eyes as he bent over her, and drink in a better medicine from his looks than any up to that time discovered—or since, to say the truth.

Then again the household was a cheerful household. Though they lived in the midst of swamps, and ponds, and canals, like a family of frogs, there was nothing cold or chilly about them. Madame Brin had had the fever twice

herself, she said all her children had had it. She would soon get the dear little girl well; and a shake or two they thought nothing of in their country. Her poor dear husband had had hundreds of them, and died drowned at sixty and upwards. The eldest girl, and the young one too were also all kind cheerfulness, and Edward, who was certainly the most melancholy and apprehensive of the party, took care to hide that such was the case whenever he was in Lucette's room. When he was unwillingly away, his thoughts were very heavy, for though it must be confessed they rested principally on his fair companion, yet they would often turn to other subjects of care. Leave her amongst perfect strangers he could not—he would not; but when he considered that he had lost valuable letters, much money, much time, still more valuable, and asked himself whether he should still find Lord Montagu at the place of rendezvous, and if not, where he should find him—what secrets might

not have been revealed to the enemy by his losses—how much he himself might be compromised, and his passage through France endangered by the discoveries which probably had been made—there appeared a very tolerable bundle of cares for one young pair of shoulders to carry. Nevertheless, good nursing, and that skill which is given by experience, did their usual services to poor Lucette. The fits of fever were retarded, lessened, ceased, and at the end of a fortnight, she could sit at the door in the sunshine and look out. Often would she now gaze up at Edward, and at length she summoned courage to ask, in English, “Is it not time we should go forward?”

It did require a great effort of courage to put that question, for what between weakness and some other sensations, Lucette had got into a frame of mind which would have made it ever pleasant for her to remain there in the Marais all her life—if Edward Langdale had remained with her.

There is always a good effect produced by looking difficulties and unpleasant things of all sorts in the face. We either discover some mode of getting rid of them or else we learn to endure them. Very soon Edward and Lucette talked composedly over their future plans; and both agreed, with a sigh, that to proceed upon their journey as soon as she had recovered sufficient strength was unavoidable. They might both, perchance, have dreamed, and their dreams might have been somewhat wild, but with calm thought the sense of serious reality returned, and they felt that they must soon proceed together, to part very soon.

"And when shall we meet again, Edward," said Lucette, in a low voice.

Edward laid his hand upon hers, saying, sadly, "God only knows, Lucette. But I know and am sure we shall meet again. Till then, let us never part in heart. We cannot forget each other after all that has passed; and oh, let the memory be as dear to you as it

is to me ; so that when we do meet, it may be with the same feelings as we now experience."

Lucette bent down her eyes; and there was a tear in them, but that tear seemed to Edward Langdale a promise.

This was the only word of love that passed between them ; but there were other matters pressing for consideration. Neither of them knew the country round, Pierrot was as ignorant as themselves, and it was necessary to take Madame Brin, not only into consultation, but in some degree into their confidence. She was naturally a woman of strong sense ; but she was wonderfully ignorant of the world beyond the Marais.

"This is a mad scheme," she said, taking for granted all that she had heard from her cousin George, and never imagining that a Corporal in the King's army could have been deceived ; "you are both very young to run away and be married. Why this boy can hardly be nineteen and you, my child, cannot

be more than fifteen; but now you have been away so long together, it is the best thing for you. We can send for the Minister to-morrow, and he can be here on Friday. But if you be papists, you will find the matter more difficult, for—” Edward cut her short by informing her of the fact that they were both Huguenots, and at the same time attempting to undeceive her as to the purposes with which they had left Rochelle. He told her, briefly, the principal events of the last month, and besought her to aid them in reaching at least Niort, where the number of protestants still remaining insured them the means of ascertaining where the principal Huguenots leaders were to be found. All this sudden intelligence threw the good lady into a deep fit of thought. “So you do not want to be married,” she said in some bewilderment.

“Not immediately,” answered Edward, with a smile he could not repress, “but I tell you my dear lady, I do wish to be married to

Lucette as soon as ever she wished to be married to me—." Lucette looked at him almost reproachfully, but he went on to say, "Her relations have, of course, to be consulted first, and as I undertook to escort her safely to them, I must do so before I can even pretend to her hand."

"Well then," said the Mistress of La Caponniere, after several minutes' thought, "there is no way for you but to go boldly to Nantes. They will never suspect you there. Those who are nearest to the Cardinal are safer from him than those who are far off, they say. His arms are so long that they do not easily reach what is close by. You can then easily go round to Niort, and thence where you like, but go to Nantes first—go to Nantes first. It is the safest plan." This suggestion required long and much consideration; but at length it was adopted though the minor arrangements, afterwards devised, removed a great many of the objections which at first presented them-

selves. Edward was to be transformed into a young farmer of the Marais, and Lucette to appear as his sister, while Pierrot assumed the garb of one of the peasants. It took two days to procure the long-waisted square-cut coat and wide breeches for Master Ned, and a similar, but coarser dress for Pierrot ; for tailors were not plenty in the Marais, and clothing shops were none, so that the wardrobes of neighbours were to be ransacked. Lucette was more easily supplied with the manifold petticoats and the white cap to cover her immense luxuriance of hair, changes of apparel, provisions of many kinds, and good wine, were stored in a boat, and after about three weeks' residence in that wild and strange, but not uninteresting district, with two stout boatmen for their guides, Lucette and her companions took their departure from La Caponniere, and entered upon a track perhaps even more desolate and intricate than that which they quitted. By Tallemont, by La Motte, Achard, and by Loge,

they proceeded on the country road, as it was called, towards Nantes, and at the end of the third day began to approach a city, the glory of which certainly has departed, but the interest of which—a melancholy interest, remains.

Before I close the chapter, however—a chapter devoted to quiet, if not dull subjects.—I may as well say a few words—a very few—upon the actual state of France and the changes which had taken place within the last five weeks, which were not without their significance.

Every day had seen La Rochelle more and more closely hemmed in by the royal forces. Slowly, quietly, but steadily, troops had poured into the Sevres and the Aunis; and the ports in the neighbourhood of the threatened city had become crowded with small armed vessels. Invested by land, the citizens of Rochelle might have felt alarm if their fine port had been also subjected to blockade, but their own powerful fleets, and the certain aid of England,

made them indifferent to the small, though numerous ships of the enemy, and they never comprehended, till too late, that the gigantic mind of their enemy was then planning a vast undertaking, destined to deprive them of all the advantage of their position. Their egregious confidence was perhaps further increased by a knowledge that the Court of France, and indeed the whole country, was fermenting with plots against the man whom they had most to dread, and it is not impossible that they were more or less aware that the most formidable conspiracy which had ever threatened the power of Richelieu was upon the very eve of explosion.

CHAPTER XV.

It was late in the afternoon of a bright warm day, when three strangers to the city of Nantes, took their way across the magnificent Cour St. Pierre—one of the most beautiful public places in Europe—somewhat hurrying their pace when they saw the number of gay groups with which that part of the town was crowded. “This way—this way, sir,” said the seemingly tall, lean peasant, who carried a good sized

bundle on his arm, " I know the house exactly, and the sooner we are out of this the better."

" On my soul a pretty little wench!" exclaimed one of a group of gay looking gallants, who were lounging about at the upper end of the square; " Let us take her from that young boor. My pretty maid, will you honour some poor gentlemen with your company to take a cool glass of wine!"

" Stand out of the way, sir, and let my sister pass," said Edward Langdale, in French, speaking as coolly as he could, for he knew the danger of a brawl in that place, and at that moment.

" Ha!" said the other, with a cool stare, " and though you speak mighty good French for a peasant of the Marais, yet I think we shall have to teach you some better manners, boy. Do you presume to push against a gentleman? This must give you a lesson," and he raised the cane he carried as if to apply it to Edward's shoulders.

The lad's hand was instantly on the dagger concealed under the flaps of his broad-cut brown coat, but he had no occasion to use it; for at the very moment when blood was on the point of being shed, a man of gentlemanly appearance, dressed altogether in black, and without any arms, stepped in between Edward and his antagonist, saying, in a deep tone, "Hold!"

The uplifted cane had nearly descended upon his head, but the moment the young coxcomb beheld the face of the intruder, his countenance changed, the colour came into his face, and he turned the descending blow away, though he could not stop it entirely.

"I have seen all that has passed, Monsieur des Touches," said the stranger in black, "be so good as to retire into the Chateau. His Majesty, as you know, is determined to stop all insolent brawls. It will be my duty to report your conduct to these two young people as soon as I return and you shall hear the result."

The young gentleman said something about his only having said a word or two to some peasants of the Marais ; but the other cut him short, observing that the treatment of the peasantry by the *petite noblesse* was at that very time attracting the royal attention.

"*Petite noblesse*, sir, *Petite noblesse* !" cried Monsieur des Touches, with a face as red as fire, "do you call me of the *petite noblesse*."

"Certainly," replied the other, "but as you do not retire as I have told you, it will be better that you should go in a different manner—Guard ! and he raised his hand towards the bridge of the chateau, where two or three of the King's soldiers were standing.

Two of the guard instantly ran up ; but before they arrived, Monsieur des Touches was moving sullenly towards the gate, and the stranger in black, without taking any further notice of him, turned to those who had gathered round, saying, "Have the goodness to disperse gentlemen. I will take care of these young people."

The gay gallants of the French court might possibly have indulged in some merriment at the expense of the elderly gentleman, who had taken a young girl out of their companion's hands ; but there were at that moment some sinister rumours hovering about the city of Nantes, which a good deal depressed the courtly circle, although the courtiers endeavoured still to keep up an air of sprightly carelessness, and sometimes probably overacted their part in public. On the present occasion, however, they dispersed quietly, one giving the good day to the stranger, by the name of Monsieur Trouson. As soon as the rest had passed away the face of the stranger cleared, and looking at Edward and Lucette, with a good humoured smile, he asked, " And now young people, where is it you want to go to ? "

" To the Auberge du Soleil," answered Edward, using as few words as possible, for he remembered, perhaps a little too late, that his language and his dress did not correspond,

and that though his garb was that of the Marais, his tongue was not at all imbued with the jargon of its inhabitants.

Monsieur Trouson, however, took no notice, and said he would show them how to find it; but in walking slowly and soberly along, he began to chat about many things, asked if ever they had been in Nantes before, and not only proposed to show them some of the objects most worthy of attention in the place, but actually, as he admitted, led them a little out of their way to point out the crosses of Loraine, which had been scattered over one of the faces of the building when it was in the hands of the league. The Cathedral, too, with its stunted towers and gigantic nave, he must show them, and he asked so many questions waiting for replies, that both Edward and Lucette were found to speak much more good French than was at all desirable.

At length, a slight twinkle in their good companion's eye, and a little curl of the upper

lip, led Master Ned to the complete certainty that they were discovered, and taking a moment when Monsieur Trouson—who seemed to be determined to know the whole party—was speaking with Pierrot, Edward suddenly bent down his head and whispered a few words in English to Lucette. “We are discovered, I fear,” he said, “if any questions are asked, remember the words of the safe conduct I showed you, tell how we were stopped in trying to quit Rochelle, and say that when the Abbey was burned we escaped in a boat as best we could, and came on here.”

Lucette was about to remind him that she could no longer pass for the page named in the safe conduct; but Monsieur Trouson finished his brief conversation with Pierrot and turned to the younger people again, saying, with his placid air, “Now we will turn this way, and you will soon be at your resting place. So I suppose you two are the children of some good rich proprietors of the Marais,

and have got leave to come and see the world; now the court is at Nantes?"

"No sir, we are not," answered Edward, with perfect calmness, for he had now determined upon his course.

"Then, in Heaven's name, what are you, young people?" asked their companion, "Yours are not peasants' manners, nor peasants' tongues; but let me tell you that it is somewhat dangerous to be masquerading here just now."

"Very likely, sir," replied Edward, "but we shall not masquerade long, if we are doing so at all. As to who we are I shall have to explain that to a very High Personage presently, and to ask him if he will suffer his name and handwriting to be set at naught? I shall not show him so little respect as to talk to any one else about the affair, before I talk to him, as I must see him if possible before I quit Nantes."

"You are discreet," said Monsieur Trouson, leading the way through a street which ran

down to the Loire, at the back of the chateau. "There, where you see that tall pole and bush, is the *Soleil*, but if you would take my advice you would choose another *auberge*. That is not fit for your station; and besides," he added, with a shrewd smile, "you will find nobody there who speaks anything but the *patois de Marais*, and I suspect that would puzzle you."

Edward persisted, however, and the next moment their companion stopped at the door of a heavy stone house, of small size, the back of which must have nearly touched the ditch of the old castle. "Here I stop," he said, "you see the inn, good evening." They gladly bade him adieu, and hurried on down the street, Pierrot thanking Heaven that they had got so well out of his clutches. "He is a spy, I am sure," said Pierrot, "but if we order the coach we were talking of, to be at the door by day-break, we can get through the gates and be off before he has time to get his orders."

"His orders from whom?" demanded Edward, in some surprise.

"From the Cardinal, to be sure," replied the other, "do you not know that—," but by this time the three had reached the door of the *Auberge du Soleil*, and Edward had paused, not at all satisfied with the look of the place. There was an air, not exactly of discomfort, but of loose, disorderly carelessness about it which pained him to think of, in connection with Lucette. She herself entered the passage without a word; but she looked sad, and, as it were, bewildered; and the sallow walls, the dirty tiles of the floor, and various noises of singing and riot from neighbouring rooms, did not serve to reassure her. Edward was at her side in a moment, and laying his hand gently upon her arm, he said, "Lucette, this will not do. We must seek some other place." The appearance of the landlord, who now presented himself, was not at all calculated to change this resolution, and as he was somewhat

inclined to be uncivil, when he found that his guests were likely to go elsewhere, Edward left him to the management of Pierrot, and turned towards the door. There, however, he found, looking in, a servant in the livery of the court, with two men in military garb, and the former immediately saluted him civilly, saying, "I am ordered by my master to request your presence, with the young lady and your servant."

"And who may be your master?" asked Edward, not at all liking the look of the guard.

"Monsieur de Trouson, sir, Secretary of the King's Cabinet," replied the man.

"It is enough, sir," replied Edward, "we will accompany you, if you will lead the way."

The servant bowed and preceded them, and the two guards followed, but now Lucette and Edward found the great advantage of speaking two languages. Few were the minutes which they had to spare; but these few minutes were filled with words, upon which, though their

companion comprehended them not, depended their safety, and perhaps the life of one of them.

"We shall assuredly be asked, dear Lucette," said Edward, "how you came first to travel with me, as a page, and since then have resumed your woman's apparel. May I, dear girl, say, in case of need, that we sought to be married in a foreign land, because our friends at home thought us too young. Your liberty, and my life, may be perilled by any other course."

"Yes, say so—say so," replied Lucette. "Good Clement Tournon told me twice that if the Catholics caught me, they would certainly shut me up in a convent, till I adopted their faith."

"But what name shall I give you?" asked the youth, just as they reached the door of the house into which Monsieur de Trouson had turned.

"Call me Lucette de Mirepoix," answered the young girl, "it is one of my names, so that I have a right to take it."

"This way, sir," said the valet, "Monsieur de Trouson is in the Castle;" and, passing the door, he led the way through a narrow building, which, from the street, seemed like an ordinary dwellinghouse, but which, in reality, was merely a sort of outwork of the Chateau, with which it was connected by a bridge over the fosse.

Edward saw the two guards following, but he merely said, with a cold air, "Are you taking us to prison, sir?"

"No, Monsieur, I am taking you to Monsieur de Trouson," replied the valet, "Please to step into this room." By this time they had passed the bridge, and had taken some half dozen steps along a dark passage, through the thicker part of the outer walls; and as the man spoke, he opened the door of a small room, with one of those deep windows, which almost formed another chamber within the first. The room was quite vacant, and as soon as the three travellers had entered, the servant left them, with the door partly open, showing them the

soldiers without, as if upon guard. Poor Lucette trembled a good deal; but she lost not her presence of mind, and another hasty consultation took place between herself, Edward, and Pierrot, in the course of which their plans were finally settled, as far as any plans can be settled, when the events against which they are provided are still uncertain. They remained undisturbed for some five minutes, and then the servant reappeared, with some glasses, a bottle of apparently very old wine, and a page carrying some cakes and comfits on a salver. These were hardly placed on the table, and some seats drawn round, when Monsieur de Trouson himself appeared, with a smiling countenance, and desired his young friends to sit down as if they were honoured guests.

"Retire and wait without," he added, turning to the valet and the page, "we can serve ourselves. Take that good man with you and see that he is well attended to. Now, Monsieur Apsley, have the goodness to taste this

wine. I have helped the young lady—and tell me whether you could find any as good at the poor little cabaret where you were inclined to bestow yourself. My auberge is the better of the two; believe me.”

“While we are treated with so much courtesy, sir,” replied Edward, filling his glass,—“but may I ask what has led you to believe that my name is Apsley?”

Monsieur de Trouson, who was pressing some of the confectionary upon Lucette, did not answer for a moment, but then, turning round said, with his usual placid smile, “What was that? Oh, how I knew you—Why, my good sir, we have been expecting you for some time. His Eminence has letters for you, and very nearly a thousand crowns in gold, which a good man called Jacques Beaupré brought in about ten days ago. How I knew you! Why, my young friend, do you suppose any thing is unknown at this court?”

He paused, and looked straight at Edward's

face, but the young man had passed through scenes which had given a resolute firmness of character not easily discomposed, and he answered at once, without a change of countenance, "True, you may have known that Sir Peter Apsley was about to visit Nantes—though that could be but a guess, for I did not intend to come this way till I was compelled—but it must have been a still shrewder guess to lead you to suppose a young man dressed as a peasant of the Marais, to be an English gentleman."

"Guesses are good things," said de Trouson, "in fact almost every thing that man knows, or thinks he knows, is a mere guess. But when we have good hooks to hang them on, we can shape them almost into certainties. You have heard of birds who, when they hide their heads, fancy their bodies hidden. Now, my young friend, when next you want to hide yourself in a peasant's dress, take the air as well as the garb; learn something of the

patois, and do not speak English to a fair companion when there are sharp ears near. Our good friends of the Marais speak little English, and when they walk they carry their shoulders round, and their heads somewhat slouching—so—” and he imitated the air of one of the peasants so well, that even Lucette could hardly refrain a smile.

“Besides,” continued their companion, “you hinted that you wished to see the Cardinal before you quitted Nantes. Now, putting a good number of facts to those I have first mentioned, it was easy to divine that you were the personage Jacques Beaupré was in search of.”

“True,” replied Edward, “and probably I should have taken more care if I had wished to be concealed much longer—But, as you say, sir, I must, if possible, have the honour of seeing His Eminence the Prime Minister—when do you think I can be so favoured?”

“It will be somewhat difficult just now.”

said the other, with a much graver countenance than he had hitherto borne, "the Cardinal is full of very serious and painful business, certainly you cannot see him to-night."

"Then," said Edward, in a firm and confident tone, "we had better retire and seek some good inn, and I can send and crave an audience to-morrow."

"Nay, you will have to wait close at hand, and snatch your audience when you can get it," replied Monsieur de Trouson, adding, laughingly, "My auberge is the best for the purpose, depend upon it. But tell me, Monsieur Apsley, why did you disguise yourself at all, when, I have been told, you have a proper safe conduct?"

"You mean, sir, why we put on Breton dresses," replied Edward, "that was done for the best reason in the world,—because we had none other fit to wear. My whole baggage was lost, and one of my servants stopped, when it pleased some good officers near Mauzé to

turn me from my straight road and send me towards Nantes. I trust Master Jacques has brought our clothing with him. If not, we must purchase more."

"I cannot tell," replied Monsieur de Trouson, gravely. "All he did bring is in the hands of His Eminence."

A consciousness that what the man had brought might prove his destruction, perhaps induced Edward to imagine that Mousieur de Trouson laid a particular emphasis on the words "In the hands of His Eminence," but still he lost not his coolness, and he replied, "Well, then, we had better proceed to our inn, if you will recommend us to one; for that we saw but now will certainly not suit us. It is growing dusk, and I shall scarcely have time to-night to purchase clothing fit to appear in before the Cardinal."

As he spoke he rose; but the Secretary of the King's Cabinet repeated what he had before said, "This is the best auberge for your pur-

pose, and I will send for one of those tailors, who always follow courts, to relieve you of your unseemly attire. The young lady, too, had better have other clothing. That, too, shall be attended to."

Edward now saw that nothing but a direct question would bring forth the truth as to whether he was to consider himself a prisoner or not, and he put it much in the same words as he had used to the officer near Mauzé.

"You have been very discreet with your answers, my young friend," said Monsieur de Trouson, still smiling, "let me advise you to be as discreet with your questions. But I can excuse a little anxiety, and therefore tell you that you must look upon yourself as a prisoner or not, just as you please. You will not be treated as such, further than being lodged in this chateau, with a slight hint that you had better not try to leave it till you have seen His Eminence. If you will give me your word as an English gentleman, not to make the

attempt, you shall have all the liberty possible, and you shall be only like one of your good English lords, kept in doors by a fit of gout. You shall have as good a table at least as any auberge here could furnish, and you will save money by living at the King's expense. But if you do not make me that promise, I am afraid there must be such things as keys sent for, and a turning of locks, which might be disagreeable to the ear."

"I understand, sir," replied Edward, "and of course make the promise, "but I certainly did not expect that when I came here, furnished with a pass from His Eminence, it would imply so little."

"Let me see the pass," said the secretary, somewhat abruptly, "Have you it with you?"

"Yes, it is here," answered Edward, drawing it forth. "As it is my only security in the present unfortunate state of affairs between the two countries, I have taken care not to lose that."

Trouson took it from his hand and carried it to the window, to see better, saying, after he had gazed at it for a moment or two, "Yes, it is in due form. That is the signature of His Eminence beyond all doubt. Here are mentioned Sir Peter Apsley, a page, and two serving men. Am I to presume that Mademoiselle is or was the page? Why here are no end of transformations, it would seem."

People talk of blushing like a rose—a very bad figure indeed. Roses do not blush. Their gentle colour knows no sudden change. The soft emotion of the heart which sends the tell-tale blood into the cheek they never feel, but, as an image of eternal health, keep the same hue unchanged. No, Lucette blushed like the morning sky, when, conscious of the coming of the sun, the whole face of Heaven grows rosy and more rosy.

"May I ask you, sir," continued the secretary, "if you are married to this young lady—is she your wife?—is she your sister?"

"Neither, sir," replied Edward—"neither, as yet. She may be some day my wife—till then she is to me as a sister. But, Monsieur de Trouson, if I am to submit to interrogatories at all, I should prefer that they be put by His Eminence the Cardinal himself."

"One more, and I have done," said the secretary, "How happens it that you two have been so long on the road? Could you find no means of coming to Nantes sooner?"

"If you know the time we have spent on the road, sir," replied Edward, "you should know, likewise, that Mademoiselle de Mirepoix' illness detained us."

"Mademoiselle de Mirepoix," said de Trouson, with an air of surprise, "This is altogether a somewhat strange affair; but, as you say, it will be better all reserved for the Cardinal himself. But, as Mademoiselle de Mirepoix is neither your wife nor your sister, Sir Peter, it will be necessary to place her under a lady's care while here."

"But—," said Edward, fearing a longer and stricter separation from Lucette, than he had calculated upon, "but," Monsieur de Trouson cut him short, gravely.

"No buts, my young friend. It must be even as I say," he replied, "wait here Mademoiselle, I will send some woman to you in a few minutes. You, sir, follow me and I will show you your apartment." Resistance of course was not to be thought of, but Edward could not part from Lucette coldly, and before going, he took her in his arms and kissed her warmly, whispering in English, the first real words of love, which had yet been spoken between them. "Love me, Lucette," he said, "love me whatever befalls."

The tears rose in her beautiful eyes ; but it was a moment when she felt there could be no coyness. "I do—I will," she murmured.

"Ho, ho ! said the secretary, with a smile, "is it so far gone ?" and he led the youth from the room.

Passage after passage seemed to Edward to be placing a terrible distance between him and her he loved, and cold, and dreary appeared, and indeed was, his walk through the palace of the King. At length, however, Monsieur de Trouson opened a door, at the foot of some steps, and there, in a sort of vestibule, appeared the first human beings they had seen since they quitted the room of the secretary. The first person they beheld was the valet, whom Edward had before seen, but at the other end of the corridor, near a heavy iron-plated door, was a guard, with a halberd on his shoulder.

"The room is quite ready, sir," said the valet, addressing Monsieur de Trouson, and at the same time opening a door on the right, "I lighted the fire, as the chamber has not been occupied since Monsieur de Saval left."

"That was well," replied Trouson, "and

you will remember to attend diligently upon this gentleman, and see he has all he wants. You can put his own servant a bed in the dressing closet, and let a tailor be sent for as soon as may be. And now, Monsieur Apsley, I will leave you for to night. You can, when you desire exercise, take your walk in this passage and the neighbouring rooms on that side; but a gentleman so well educated will, I know, remember that this is a palace, and not carry your peregrinations too far. On that side your walk will be impeded by the sentinel. Can I send you a book, or any thing to amuse you."

"If you have got a copy of Horace or Homer," said Edward.

Monsieur de Trouson shook his head, with a laugh, "I fear you are too learned for us," he answered, "but I will see, and send you something, at all events. The room looks cheerful enough, does it not? and in the day-time there is a fine view over the Loire. The moon is late to-night, you had better bring

more candles, Guillaume," and, with these words, he left the young Englishman, who, though the room was indeed a cheerful one, and bright with lights and a warm fire, could not but feel that he was a prisoner.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE first sensation in Edward's heart was certainly that of the loss of liberty. The next was of the loss of Lucette. But then came many unpleasant recollections, and not amongst the least unpleasant was the remembrance that he might very likely have incurred the loss of life. To take a false name, to enter a country with which his own was at war, with a false passport, to come from a town actually in rebellion against her king, into that king's

camp, and to be the bearer of letters to his enemies—all gave him very much the character of a spy. Edward did not like his position at all—he did not like the steps which had led to it—he did not altogether like his own conduct. Yet what could he have done when ordered by those he was bound to obey? He would do it again, he thought, if the same circumstances were to come over again; and yet to be hanged in a foreign country as a spy, was a matter for which not all the orders of all the Princes or Potentates in the world could offer any consolation.

He had walked some fifty times up and down the room, the simmering of his heart and brain acting upon him like the boiler of a locomotive steam engine, when an ecclesiastic entered with some books, and spoke a few words of bad Latin to him, to which Edward replied in so much better latinity that the good man speedily beat his retreat. Then came the tailor, and a tailor is always a relief except when he makes

garments too tight, or makes them too loose in one place for the purpose of making them too close in another. But this tailor was really a great man in his way ; and he did succeed in amusing Edward's mind, in a slight degree, by the importance he attached to his cutting and to every one of its accessories. He also estimated very highly his own station in that calling. He told Edward that although he had not the honour of clothing His Majesty, because all the world knew he was very careless in his dress, yet he made for all the handsomest young noblemen of the court. He himself, he assured his listener—and he dropped his voice while he spoke—had *composed* the very dress in which the poor Count de Chalais had been arrayed on the very day of his arrest.

“Indeed,” said Edward, “is he arrested? What are they going to do with him?”

“They will cut off his head, to a certainty,” said the tailor; “though he was the King’s

greatest favourite, His Eminence was his greatest enemy, and the enemies of the Cardinal never escape."

This was such cold comfort to Edward Langdale that he brought the subject back to the matter of his own clothing. "I shall want one suit as soon to-morrow as possible," he said, "for I trust I shall have an early audience of His Eminence; and of course I cannot present myself before him in this garb."

"Of course, of course, Seigneur," said the tailor, with a look of horror, "that would be as good as a confession. Of what may your Lordship have been guilty, to assume such a dress—high treason?"

"I hope not," said the young man, "at least, if I have committed *leze majesté*, it must have been in my sleep. But what about the clothes, my good friend,—can I have them?"

"Assuredly, Seigneur, assuredly," answered the man, "I have a beautiful *haut de chausses* and a *pourpoint* which will fit you exactly—

they are in the best taste—philimot velvet, opened with blue, and silver points. They were made for poor Monsieur de Courmerin ; but he never had the opportunity of wearing them ; for he put it off for one single day ; and that very day he was arrested, and his head was cut off before the end of the week. They will suit you perfectly, but the cloak, I must make myself. I will keep the workmen up all night sooner than disappoint you, however. You had better trust the whole arrangement to me—the boots, the collar, the hat, and then all will correspond."

Edward readily agreed to the proposal, and, merely stipulating for a certain price, as his funds were running short, he dismissed the tailor, whose conversation had a certain ominous croak about it which was all the more painful from the frivolities with which it was mixed.

Not ten minutes more passed ere supper was brought in—good fare and excellent wine—and perhaps of the latter the poor youth did

take more than he usually did, from a feeling that something was needful to raise his spirits. He felt more compassion that night for the faults of Pierrot la Grange, than he had ever known before, but he did not follow his good servant's example, drinking not enough even to have the effect desired.

After supper he felt more melancholy than before; and that sensation increased as all noises died away in the castle, and in the neighbourhood, and the dull gloomy ripple of the Loire was the only sound that broke the stillness. The air of the room seemed oppressive to him. He looked at the door, and wondered if the last time the valet had gone out he had locked it; and he walked towards it, and opened it. All in the corridor was as he had seen it before, the guard at the door on the right, with his halberd on his shoulder, and two lamps burning pendant from the ceiling. The air seemed less oppressive there; and Edward determined to go forth and take his walk

without, as he had been permitted. He turned to one side and then to the other, without any notice being taken by the soldier, till once, approaching within some five paces of the iron plated door, the man drew himself up, and, in a stern tone, told him to keep off. Edward retrod his steps, and passed up and down several times, till at length the door at the other end of the passage opened, and a tall, fine-looking man, in a large cloak and a hat and feathers, with a small silver candlestick in his hand, appeared and walked straight towards him. The stranger's eyes were bent upon the ground, and at first he did not seem to see the youth ; but when he did, he stopped suddenly and gazed at him from head to foot.

Edward walked quietly on, and passed the other without taking much notice, though he thought his stare somewhat rude. At the end of the corridor he turned again, just in time to see the stranger opening the iron-plated door with a key, while the guard stood in a statue-like

attitude before him, with presented arms. When the door was opened the light of the candle served just to show the top of a flight of stone steps, and all the rest was darkness. The door shut to with a bang the next moment, and the youth pursued his walk, feeling it would be impossible for him to sleep for some hours to come. Well nigh an hour went by, and the young Englishman was returning to his room to try at least to sleep, when that heavy door opened, banged to, was locked, and the stranger whom he had before seen, again passed him. This time, however, his head was borne high, and there was a strange look of triumph on his face ; but he was evidently in haste ; and though he fixed his eyes upon Edward with a gaze that seemed to pierce through him, he paused not an instant, but passed on.

Why, he could not tell, but all this excited the youth's imagination. There was something strange in it, he thought who could that man be to whom the guard paid such respect. He could not be the King, for Louis was not

so tall, and had no such commanding carriage. It might be some high officer of the Royal prisons, and that door with the dark stone steps beyond, might lead to the ancient dungeons, where many a prisoner, in ancient and in modern times, had awaited *au secret*, as it was called, judgment or death. "Such may soon be my fate!" thought Edward, and with that pleasant reflection he re-entered his chamber, and, casting off his clothes, lay down to rest. It was long before sleep came; and then troublous dreams took from it the character of repose. He felt himself, in fancy, in the hands of the hangman—the gibbet was over his head, and on a scroll fixed to his breast, was written, in large letters, "A Spy."

Then again his dead body was lying in a chapel, and close by, at an illuminated altar, appeared Lucette, with a bright train of fair girls, just about to give her hand to a cavalier much older than herself, whose face bore a strange resemblance to that of the man who

had twice passed him in the corridor, and with a start he awoke, crying, "She is mine."

It was already day; and but a few minutes went by ere Pierrot presented himself. "I have seen Jacques Beaupré, Master Ned," he said, "and I trust all is safe. That fellow is shrewd, and he vows that he has not said a word. He escaped the troopers at Mauzé, found his way to the Castle, and gave up the bags to Monsieur le Prince de Soubise. The Prince opened them without any ceremony, took out a letter to himself, read it, and then sent him on with one of the bags, telling him to find you out at all risks. He was stopped immediately he reached Nantes, but he says, even to my face that he only knows you as Sir Peter Apsley, though I heard good old Syndic Tournon call you by your right name to him himself. He says that the Prince put several letters in the bag, with the money and the clothes, and there is the only danger."

"How did you contrive to see him?" asked

Edward, abruptly, for he feared every moment to be interrupted.

"Why, sir, there are various sorts of detention," said Pierrot; "there is imprisonment *au plus grand secret*; there is imprisonment *au secret*; there is simple arrest and imprisonment; there is surveillance; but there is nothing more. Now as you, Master Ned, are simply under surveillance, they have left me, as your servant, to roam about as I please, and I made the best use of my time. Jacques Beaupré I found—" But as he spoke, Monsieur de Trouson's valet entered to tell Edward that breakfast would be served to him in a moment, and began to set the room in order. Edward tried to get rid of him, perhaps too apparently; but he did not succeed. In vain the young gentleman hinted that the tailor had not brought the clothes he had promised; the man replied civilly, that he would seek him as soon as the breakfast was served; and before there could be any further question

upon the subject, two lacquais and a page appeared. Before the breakfast was carried away the tailor was in the room; and before Edward was fairly dressed in his new apparel, Monsieur de Trouson himself appeared, and sent every one from the room, Pierrot amongst the rest.

"I come to tell you," said the Secretary, "that His Eminence will receive you at ten o'clock;" and then, after a short pause, during which he seemed to think deeply, he added, "If you will allow me, sir, as a friend, to advise you, you will deal in every thing frankly and sincerely with the Cardinal. Men are often much mistaken as to his character. Deceit and treachery upon the part of his enemies has, of course, made him suspicious, but candour is soon perceived by him, and always appreciated."

"I really do not know to what you particularly refer," replied Edward, "but I shall

certainly answer any questions His Eminence chooses to propound to me, truly."

"That is well," said the other, somewhat drily, "but will you answer me one question. Is not Mademoiselle de Mirepoix a near relative of the Duchess de Chevreuse? Reply frankly, I beg you."

"I do not know," answered Edward, at once, "I only know that she is connected with the Prince de Soubise, and—"

"The same, the same," said his companion, interrupting him. "That is rather unfortunate, for neither Madame de Chevreuse nor the Prince is in good odour at this court."

"The Cardinal, I am sure, is too generous to make a young girl, who has never offended him, suffer for the faults of those who have."

Monsieur de Trouson made no reply; but soon after left the young Englishman, merely saying, in a warning tone, "Remember—Be frank."

Edward then proceeded to finish his toilet, and it cannot be denied that he felt more lightsome and at his ease in his new apparel. Still he could not help revolving the coming interview, and with that most foolish, though common practice of us poor mortals, in difficult circumstances, considering the answers he might make to questions which might never be asked. He would have given much for five minutes more of private conversation with Pierrot, but that worthy appeared no more, and for the simple reason that he was not permitted to leave the room to which he had been taken to breakfast. An hour thus passed, in anxious and solitary thought, and then a man in a black robe, something like that of the verger of a cathedral, opened the door, and summoned him to the presence of the Cardinal Prime Minister. Edward answered nothing, but merely bowed his head and followed. He was conscious that he had felt some weakness;

but now that the all-important moment arrived, he nerved himself to bear all firmly, and the very effort gave a dignity to his whole person which well accorded with the handsome and graceful dress he had now assumed.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE must leave Edward Langdale for some half-hour, and carry the gentle reader with us to another part of the old Chateau of Nantes. No one can venture to say that we have not adhered to him through good and evil, with tenacity of true friendship, but we must now either turn to a different personage, and another scene, or embarrass our after-narrative with that most ugly beast, an explanation, which so frequently, in romance and poem, follows the

most brilliant heroes and most beautiful heroines, like an ill favoured cur. In a fine long room, with windows looking upon the Loire, about half-past ten o'clock in the morning, was a gentleman between forty and fifty years of age, nearer the former than the latter period. The chamber was well tapestried and furnished with chairs, scattered about in different directions, and a large table a good deal to the right of the occupant of the room—a smaller table was close at his hand, covered with papers and materials for writing, which he was using slowly and deliberately, sometimes carrying his hand to his head, as if in thought, and then again resuming the pen and writing a line or two. In person he was somewhat about the middle height, with straight, finely-cut features, and hair very slightly mingled with grey. The face, in itself, was somewhat stern, and the small pointed beard and moustache, gave somewhat of a melancholy look, but on that morning the expression was cheerful—nay, even good-humoured, and the hand that held the pen

was as soft and delicate as that of a woman. His dress was principally scarlet, as a high ecclesiastic of the Romish Church, but above all he wore a light dressing-gown of dark purple, trimmed with sable. Such was Richelieu as he appeared in 1627, and those who have been accustomed to associate his name with nothing but deeds of blood and tyranny, might feel surprised could they see the bland expression of that noble countenance, that smooth, white hand, and, still more, could they look over his shoulder, and perceive that what he was writing was no grave dispatch, no terrible order, no elaborate state paper ; but some verses—grave, indeed, but neither sad nor stern.

The door opened, and the Cardinal laid down his pen. Monsieur de Trouson paused as if for permission to advance ; and Richelieu beckoned him forward, saying, “ Come in Mr. Secretary—come in, I am enjoying a space of leisure after so many long and anxious days. Till now I have little to do, and less to think of.”

"Your Eminence will allow me to remind you," said Trouson, advancing and standing by his side, "that this morning you appointed the hour of ten to see that young English gentleman."

"True," said the Cardinal, "I have not forgotten," and he pointed with his hand to the larger table, on which lay one of Master Ned's unfortunate leathern bags, adding, "What do you make of the case? Think you he is the person he represents himself, or, as our hard-headed friend before Rochelle will have it, a spy from England?"

"The passport is evidently signed by your Eminence," answered Trouson, "and the young man himself has the manners of a gentleman of distinction. He is highly educated too—a profound Greek and Latin scholar—so says Father Marlais, whom I sent to have some conversation with him. He is somewhat bluff and abrupt in his manners, it is true, as most of these islanders are; but

still his whole demeanour strikes me as dignified and even graceful. He can be no common spy, your Eminence, that is clear, and if Buckingham has chosen him for an agent, he has chosen strangely well."

"As to his learning," replied Richelieu, "that signifies little, many a poor scholar is willing to risk his neck in the hope of promotion. We have employed such ourselves, my good friend. Then as to dignity of manner, it is easily assumed. But his abruptness and brusquerie offer a different indication. It requires long habit to know when to be rude and harsh, when soft and gentle. How old did you say?"

"From eighteen to nineteen at the utmost," said de Trousion, "he appears even less."

"Well, but this girl who is with him," asked the Cardinal, "what of her?"

"That seems easily explained Monseigneur," replied the Secretary, with a smile, "she is, it would seem, of high family—related to Monsieur

de Soubise on the one side," (the Cardinal's brow became ominously dark,) "and to Madame de Chevreuse on the other."

For an instant Richelieu's brow became darker still: and with uncontrollable vehemence, he exclaimed, "Ah! she has escaped me, as she thinks; but she will find that I forget not my enemies—nor my friends, Trouson—nor my friends," he added, with one of those subtle smiles, which had at least as much of the serpent in them as the dove.

De Trouson turned a little pale; for that peculiar smile was known at the Court by this time, and it was not supposed to be favourable to those on whom it was bestowed. But the Secretary was too wise to notice it; and he merely asked, "Who has escaped your Eminence—the young lady? She was safe in the castle, not an hour ago."

"No, no, man, no," answered Richelieu, "I mean Madame de Luynes—Madame de Chevreuse, Trouson. Have you not heard

she quitted Nantes at day-break this morning, for Le Verger—Strange!" he continued, speaking to himself, "'twas only last night; and yet she must have heard enough to frighten her. Can the King betray himself and me!—She must have learned something—What is the girl's name, Monsieur de Trouson?"

"Lucette de Mirepoix, she says," replied the Secretary."

"Lucette de Mirepoix du Valais," said the Cardinal, slowly and thoughtfully, "the same—the same—de Trouson. Do you not remember there was much contention, some six years ago, between Madame de Luynes and this scheming rebel Soubise, about the guardianship of this very girl. There the Duchess was right, for she would have brought her into the bosom of the church, but Soubise was too quick for her, and sent the child away—perhaps to England, to make sure she should be brought up in heresy. But my fair duchess shall find me worse to deal with than Soubise.

But you said just now," he continued, in a calmer tone, "that all could be easily explained. What did you mean, my friend?"

"Merely that her travelling with this youth, is a problem easily solved," answered the Secretary. "Last night, when they parted, there were some warm kisses passed—not at all fraternal, your Eminence; and putting those gentle signs in connexion with some words and rosy blushes, I conclude that they are bent on matrimony. Probably they have found difficulties at home, and, as is not unfrequent with these English, they have gone off together."

"Is the young man of noble birth, think you?" asked the Cardinal, thoughtfully.

"Not of high rank, even amongst the English," answered de Trouson, "his very name shews it."

Richelieu smiled, but this time it was a bland and pleasant smile. "We will punish her," he said, speaking to himself,—“punish both!”

"But your Eminence, if the safe conduct be yours, as I think, and the young man be really what he pretends, you will hardly—."

"Hand me that leathern bag and the knife," said the Minister, interrupting him, and seemingly paying not the slightest attention to the Secretary's words, "And now," he continued, when de Trouson had obeyed, "let the youth be brought to me; and have the girl taken to the adjoining room, ready to be brought in when I require her. See no one converses with her, my excellent good friend."

The Secretary bowed his head and withdrew, repeating to himself, "My excellent good friend!"—"I have some way offended him. His words are too kind!—" but then, after a moment's thought, he murmured in almost the same words, which Richelieu had used a minute or two before, "Can the King have betrayed me? If so he has betrayed himself too, for God knows I advised him solely for his benefit."

Louis the Thirteenth had now been on the throne of France about sixteen years, and Richelieu had not been actually of the King's council more than three ; but both had been long enough before the world's eyes for men to have learned that a king could betray his best friends from fear or weakness, and that a minister could be the most gentle in manners when he was most savage at heart. Richelieu was fond of cats, and perhaps learned some lessons from his favourites. However, in the present instance, de Trouson guessed rightly, the King had betrayed him to his powerful minister. The night before, nearly at midnight, the Cardinal had carried to the King the confession of the unhappy Count de Chalais, drawn from him in his dungeon by the Minister himself ; perhaps—nay probably, by the most unworthy artifices. In recompense for an act which put an end to one of the Monarch's painful fits of hesitation, Louis

revealed to Richelieu the names of those who, in the confidence of Royal friendship, had opposed some of the Minister's favourite schemes, and de Trouson was one. Thus he had guessed right. Whether Richelieu had guessed right likewise no one could tell. That Louis had communicated the confession of Chalais to some of his inferior confidants, who had warned Madame de Chevreuse to fly, is very probable ; but most improbable that he had warned her himself. She was the friend, companion, counsellor of his unhappy Queen, and hated by himself as well as by his minister. The King's hatred, however, was merely the reflex of his hatred for another. The enmity of Richelieu was more personal, and of long standing. When Marie de Rohan had married the Constable Duke of Luynes, the now potent Cardinal had been but a petty agent of the Queen mother, and he had been treated by the proud woman with some contempt.

When in appearance, the King, the Constable, and all the ministers had solicited for him the Cardinal's hat from Rome, he had discovered that Luynes secretly opposed what he publicly asked, and he attributed this treachery to the suggestions of the proud Duchess. When after the death of her first husband, Marie de Rohan married the princely Duke de Chevreuse and Richelieu rose rapidly to the height of power, the enmity between them was no further concealed, except by the courtly varnish of external politeness—and indeed not always that. Thus, when sitting there in his apartments in the Chateau of Nantes, there was perhaps no one in France whom Richelieu desired to mortify and humiliate, personally, more than Marie de Rohan, Duchess of Chevreuse—no, not even her distant relatives, the Prince de Soubise or his brother, the Duc de Rohan, though both had opposed the Royal forces in the field, and the reduction of both

to submission was essential to his policy. For them he had some respect, and no individual enmity, but towards her there was a rancour which prompted to any act that could sting rather than destroy. At that time even Richelieu had cause to follow the course which had been pursued by Luynes, and to avoid carrying resentments too far. He was not yet so firmly seated in power, that if he made great enemies he might not be thrown aside by a fickle King. Otherwise it might seem strange, that he dared not follow the same bold course against Madame de Chevreuse which he soon pursued against the unfortunate Chalais, and later against Montmorency and Cinq Mars. But, as I have said, his fingers were not so tightly fixed round the staff of command that he could venture to assail in front the mighty house of Montbazon and Lorraine, while Vendôme and Condé were already his enemies. It was perhaps medita-

tion upon subjects such as these that occupied the Minister's deepest thoughts, while he opened, with a sharp pen-knife the leather bag, which de Trouson had brought him, took out several letters, cut the silk and read the contents, for he did all with an absent air. But Richelieu's mind was one of those which can carry on two processes at once, one deep, intense, and mighty, the consideration of vital questions; the other the mere observation and recognition of objects for the time at least less important. He seemed to pay little attention to those letters, but yet not one word escaped him, and when he had done he replaced them in the bag, and cast it behind his chair, but within reach of his hand. He then took up from the little table, close by, the paper on which he had previously been writing, and was reading over the verses, when the door opened, and an Exempt of the court appeared, looking at the Minister with a sort of enquiring air,

Richelieu bowed his head, and the man, stepping back, but holding open the door, introduced Edward Langdale, and retired into the anti-chamber.

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

